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A study was made of the antecedents and the results to date (1968) of the merger of Agricultural Extension, General Extension, and educational broadcasting at the University of Wisconsin. This was finally achieved in 1963 by President Fred Harvey Harrington. The struggle between efforts to to maintain a traditional liberal arts orientation and efforts to expand and emphasize practical, applied arts and sciences was traced, beginning with the short courses and the Farmers' Institutes of the late 1800's. Major changes and points of conflict included the rise of Agricultural Extension, aided by the increasingly popular College of Agriculture, from 1914 until after World War II; the shift of General Extension to fee-charging off-campus and correspondence courses within a relatively formal academic program; a change of Agricultural Extension emphasis from agricultural education to Four-H and other urban extension services; and increased General Extension involvement during the 1950's and 1960's in broad, problem-oriented, foundation-supported regional development programs. It was concluded that, with the merger, university resources had been effectively concentrated for public service outreach. (ly)

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MERGER IN EXTENSION

A HISTORY AND ANALYSIS OF MERGER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

BY

ROBERT A. CARLSON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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This study is dedicated to University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington who pressed for a merged Extension; to Donald R. McNeil whose job is to make it work, and to Henry Ahlgren without whose cooperation the merger could never have been successful.

I want to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Mrs. Jan Noyola who typed transcripts of many of the tape-recorded interviews with those who worked to merge University Extension. I want to thank those who agreed to record reminiscences of their work with the separate Extension units and their reactions and activities regarding the merger of University Extension. Special appreciation is due, also, to Jesse E. Boell, University of Wisconsin Archivist. Others who aided in this study were Mrs. Carol Daugherty, Nancy Belz, Jean Dorman, Richard Powers, and Terry Reagan.

Most of all, I want to thank University Extension for providing support for me to study the Extension merger and to write its history as I understood it. And I want to express my appreciation to Professor E. David Cronon, chairman of the Department of History, for his encouragement of this project.

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Chapter 1

MERGER AND THE SEARCH FOR FEDERAL FUNDS

Early in the 1960's it became clear to many federal government officials in the United States that they would have to take some action to improve the environment in American cities and to ameliorate conditions among the large minority in the U.S. who possessed little of the nation's affluence. Action was necessary to forestall a polarization of the nation between those who would organize a non-violent or violent struggle for political power in behalf of the have-nots and those who would repress legally or extra-legally the movement for civil rights, "black power," and an improvement in the position of the underprivileged.[1] The question was no longer whether the federal government should act. The question became, rather, what form the action should take. Should the government fund private businesses to develop programs in job training? Should it utilize these and other existing institutions to meet the wide range of national needs, or should it emphasize the establishment of separate organizations like the Office of Economic Opportunity?

Into this situation at the national level stepped a spokesman for the major state universities of the nation in 1962 to argue that federal support for solving social and community problems should be concentrated in and coordinated by these public state universities.[2] He was Fred Harvey Harrington who became the president of the University of Wisconsin in 1962.[3] Dedicated to the so-called Wisconsin Idea that a public university should join forces with the state's political leaders to solve practical problems facing the people of the state, Harrington was the first university president to give vigorous leadership to the effort to gain federal funding for university general extension, a major public service arm of many American universities.

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[1] See United States Senate, Higher Education Act of 1965, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Education of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, 98th Congress, 1 Session, on S. 600, March 16, 22, 30, May 18, 19, 20, June 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, and 11, 1965 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965), three volumes, especially pp. 99, 100, 263, 265, 359, and 907.

For more than twenty years the directors of General Extension divisions of U.S. universities had worked without success for federal legislation to support expansion of their activities.[4] Their programs emphasized course work and other educational services for those living away from the university campus. General Extension shared the responsibility for extending the university's resources beyond the confines of the campus with another major university agency, the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service, which focussed its attention upon the needs of those living in rural areas.

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[2] Ibid., p. 638, and interview with Donald R. McNeil, University of Wisconsin Extension chancellor, October 5, 1967. Harrington took leadership in this effort in his position as chairman of the Committee on Federal Legislation of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges from 1962 through 1965.

[3] Biographical Information Sheet, Statewide Communication Service, University of Wisconsin, 1968.

[4] Agitation for federal funds began before World War II, conducted by university general extension leaders in their roles as lower echelon university administrators. Giving continuity to this effort for federal funds through the years was Edward L. Keller of Pennsylvania State University. (See "Report of the Committee on Federal Aid" in the Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the National University Extension Association, 1941 through 1962.)

University agricultural extension became concerned with solving practical problems of farm management from its beginning at the local level in several states in the late 1880's. Following the Minnesota example, the University of Wisconsin began agricultural extension work with a series of Farmers Institutes in 1885.[5] Although more concerned with the application of knowledge to the solution of practical, day-to-day economic and social problems of farmers, agricultural extension workers in the United States learned from the experience of the older, more tradition-minded general extension programs.

University general extension in the United States, which got its start a little earlier than university agricultural extension, tended to follow the English example of providing cultural lectures and courses rather than practical, applied programs. General extension began in the U.S. with a series of systematic public lectures in 1876 at the new Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Interest in general extension developed rapidly in the nation, culminating with the organization of the American Society for Extension Learning in 1890. Like the few other general extension programs in the U.S., general extension work at the University of Wisconsin had a cultural, rather than a practical, orientation. General extension activities got started at the University of Wisconsin in the 1880's in response to the demand of communities for cultural lectures and courses. During the early 1900's the University of Wisconsin's General Extension division became as deeply involved in applied research as its Agricultural Extension service, working to improve city life and the governmental affairs of municipalities and the state. General Extension's applied research orientation faded in the 1930's when the organization began to emphasize a more formal academic program. After World War II General Extension again turned toward applied programs. With the backing of President Harrington, these programs in the 1960's began to approach the level they had achieved earlier in the century.[6]

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[5] Alfred Charles True, A History of Agricultural Extension Work in the United States, 1785-1923, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1928), pp. 14-20, 43 and 44.

While the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service of the nation's universities had long received part of its support from the federal government, General Extension's twenty year effort for federal support had failed. From 1940 on, the advocates of federal support for general extension work gained the introduction in Congress of a series of bills to fund a broad range of general extension programs around the country to complement the more narrowly defined responsibility of the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service.[7] All these efforts of the General Extension directors failed until University of Wisconsin President Harrington provided the leadership after 1962 to gain enactment of a bill to put the nation's universities to work on the massive problems of the city, just as they were already involved in practical rural improvement through the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service.

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[6] James Creese, The Extension of University Teaching, (New York: American Association for Adult Education, 1941), pp. 32-38. See, also, below, chapter 3.

With full-fledged support by a man in Harrington's position, the effort to gain federal funds for general extension work gained credence in the highest levels of the education profession and of the national government.[8] Harrington put his special assistant, Donald R. McNeil, to work in Washington and elsewhere to enlist support for a bill to fund the nation's General Extension divisions with federal money. Because of Harrington's position as the president of one of the leading U.S. institutions of higher education, McNeil had access to a wide range of influential policy makers.[9] Out of the work of

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[7] "Testimony Before the House of Representatives" by E. A. Lowe, associate director of the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, University of Georgia, in Proceedings of the Forty-third Annual Meeting of the National University Extension Association, Hotel Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, July 6-9, 1958, appendix VII, p. 79.

[8] McNeil interview, October 5, 1967.

[9] *Ibid.*

Harrington and others at high professional levels in education came Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to support general extension "to meet today's severe problems in urban living and in controlling and assimilating the effects of the new industrial revolution."[10]

President Lyndon B. Johnson in January of 1965 put his Administration behind such "grants to support university extension concentrating on the problems of the community." Calling on the nation's universities to serve the cities as they had served the farms, President Johnson encouraged them to work to solve the "problems of poverty, residential blight, polluted air and water, inadequate mass transportation and health services, strained human relations, and overburdened municipal services." He encouraged the universities to put into practice their knowledge of community planning, educational research and development, economic and job market analysis, professional and business education, and education for the disadvantaged.[11]

When Congress enacted these recommendations into law in Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965, it seemed that for the first time the nation's General Extension divisions would have access to large amounts of money enabling them to develop programs requiring no fees from participants. No longer would general extension programs be largely by and for the middle class that could pay for them. Federal funding would, thereby, further increase the flexibility of the extension concept. Already extension workers, both general and agricultural, could forego such luxuries as prerequisites and grades and could utilize a wide range of methods, including correspondence study, person-to-person field demonstrations, and radio and television.

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[10] Prepared Statement by Francis Keppel, commissioner of education, in U.S. Senate, Higher Education Act of 1965, p. 265.

[11] President Lyndon B. Johnson in U.S. Senate, Higher Education Act of 1965, p. 748.

Federal funding, however, could also require some changes within the nation's universities to ensure efficient use of this new support. At the same time as he exercised his national leadership, University of Wisconsin President Harrington also pressed for changes in organization in his own University to enable the institution to undertake more effectively the kind of programs for which he sought federal funds. In this reorganization effort at the University of Wisconsin, Harrington was following a trend he had noted in U.S. universities early in the 1960's.[12] This trend involved the combining of the public service or general outreach elements of the university under one administrative agency. Responding to the concerns of U.S. Senators Jacob Javits and Robert Kennedy of New York and others that the universities should coordinate their extension activities in order to use additional federal funds efficiently, Harrington told them that "We at the University of Wisconsin, for example, are in the process of combining our agricultural extension, our general extension, radio and television, all these outreach things, into one place."[13]

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[12] Interview with Fred Harvey Harrington, University of Wisconsin, February 7, 1968.

It is this merger of the various Extension units at the University of Wisconsin into one University Extension, an approach expedited by the discussions surrounding the efforts to obtain federal funding for general extension work, that will be the focus of this study. The paper will look at the philosophy underlying the University of Wisconsin merger, the history behind it, and the means by which it was accomplished. Extension administrators, other policy makers, and the general public will find here a case history of how it is possible to unite strong, independent extension elements to increase a university's public service capacity.

The General Extension unit, of course, was only one element in the public service side of the University of Wisconsin. Another major element in Wisconsin's Extension services, as in those of one or more similar public institutions in most states, was the financially strong Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service, a separate University unit cooperatively supported by federal, state, and county funds since 1914 and dedicated largely to serving the diminishing numbers of farmers and rural people in Wisconsin. While it was only in 1965 that general extension activities received federal support to any appreciable extent to meet community problems, the Agricultural Extension Service had received federal support for more than fifty years.

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[13] U.S. Senate, Higher Education Act of 1965, p. 676.

Agricultural extension work began late in the nineteenth century at a time of relatively poor transportation and communication facilities in the U.S. when the boundaries between town and country were clear. It was also a time when farmers had considerable power in state and national political affairs because of the numbers of Americans engaged in farming. Both for political reasons and on grounds of a clear distinction as to the public served, the creation and maintenance of a separate Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service could be justified for many years. By the 1960's, however, the communications and transportation revolutions in the U.S., the blurring of urban-rural distinctions, and a weakening political position of farmers negated the earlier justifications of a separate agricultural extension operation.

Missouri, West Virginia, Utah, and a few other states reorganized their extension units in various ways early in the 1960's. Usually the reorganization meant that a stronger Agricultural Extension unit simply swallowed the weaker General Extension operation. In Wisconsin, though, General Extension and Cooperative Extension were at relatively equal levels of strength. And at Wisconsin the University's outreach or extension activities included another independent and relatively strong organization-- the radio-television unit that operated a television station in Madison and a series of radio stations around the state.

In 1963, less than one year after he became president of the University, Harrington took the initiative in pressing for a combining of these traditionally separate units into one public service outreach element of the University-- University Extension. He did so in the name both of progress and of tradition, calling for a return of extension work at the University to the high level it had reached during the early twentieth century Progressive Era in Wisconsin.[14]

Harrington saw the Extension merger and the involvement of the University in practical, applied programs as crucial in retaining the importance and influence achieved by the University of Wisconsin in the state and by the public state universities in American life. Early in its history the University of Wisconsin accepted federal funds intended for support of practical agricultural and mechanical education, providing a strong impetus for the later implementation of the Wisconsin Idea of university service to the public. While accepting the funds and establishing an agricultural department, the University had at first so emphasized "pure" research and a knowledge of the classics that it nearly lost its public financial backing to a proposed new separate agricultural college. Only by strong leadership did the University Regents forestall this move and block the diffusion of state resources in the support of higher education. Many other states in the U.S. did create a new institution to do the job when the state's classical liberal arts institution refused to provide a "practical" education. Harrington was not going to let the University of Wisconsin lose out in the 1960's when he saw American society again requiring practical, applied research from its universities or from some other institution. With the development of such new organizations as the Office of Economic Opportunity and the federal government's funding of private employers to conduct job training programs, Harrington could well sense that the state universities were at another crossroads in their history. If the universities did not move ahead with practical, applied programs, other institutions would develop that would do the job and detract from the support, strength, and stature of the public state universities.[15]

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[14] Harrington interview.

The crucial question, of course, was whether it would not be better for the universities to concentrate on teaching undergraduates and graduates and on conducting research, rather than taking on still another broad area of concern. One might wonder, for example, if undergraduate students, already concerned over the emphasis on research and graduate studies, would supinely accept what could become still another reduction in their place in the priorities of the university.

The issue of an increasing emphasis on university work with social and community problems may appear today as a moot question.

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[15] Ibid.

In light of the actual receipt by U.S. universities of far less federal funding than anticipated under Title I of the Higher Education Act, the result of Vietnam War demands, much of the thrust for Extension merger and for other such actions by which universities might show a willingness to use federal funds efficiently had faded by 1968.[16] It would appear, however, that the downturn in extension development in 1968 was a momentary retreat in an inexorable trend to increased dependence in the U.S. upon university extension for practical programs in community development and in the alleviation of poverty. With the eventual end of the war in Vietnam, the pressure for federal money, for Extension merger, and for an expanded role of university extension in programs to solve practical problems in the lives of Americans of all levels of education and economic backgrounds were likely to re-emerge. The problems were being extensively documented. The President's Commission on Civil Disorders, for example, published a 700-page book in 1968 calling for "unprecedented levels of funding" to solve racial and poverty problems of the society.[17] With the nation's large state universities likely to play an important role in such programs in the future, it would seem appropriate to look at the history of a leading Extension operation, its merger, and its hopes and prospects for the future.

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[16] Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 had recommended a twenty-five million dollar expenditure in the first year, with provision for possible increases in the next few years. Harrington had asked Congress for a minimum of fifty million dollars a year for Title I activities in 1967 and 1968 (Harrington testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Special Subcommittee on Education, March 16, 1965). The Vietnam War and congressmen unconvinced of the act's merit combined to hold actual expenditure authorizations to ten million dollars a year from 1966 to 1968. The University of Wisconsin received just over $201,000 of these funds in each of these years (figures from University of Wisconsin Title I office, March, 1968). By 1968 the national meeting of General Extension organizations and of presidents of state universities no longer abounded with talk of mergers. Indeed, the report was that some merger attempts had broken down, such as the effort in Minnesota.

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[17] See U.S. Riot Commission, Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, (Toronto, New York, and London: Bantam Books, 1968).

Chapter 2

TOWARD A MORE PRACTICAL CURRICULUM

The University of Wisconsin gained strength early in its history from the federal Land Grant Act of 1862 which provided the state with 240,000 acres of land, the sale of which was to support a practical program of higher education in the agricultural and mechanical arts. Although neither the backers of industrial education nor the liberal arts professors at the University of Wisconsin were enthusiastic about lodging the new practical agricultural and mechanical program within the existing state university, none the less the University of Wisconsin received the responsibility. No other possibility seemed viable, and neither the University Regents nor the state legislators wanted to refuse the land grant. The acceptance of the land grant responsibility by the University of Wisconsin led to significant changes in its character, changes which would eventually involve the University in practical, applied research and a strong extension effort in public service.

After many years of effort by advocates of practical education, the federal government decided during the nation's Civil War in 1862 to provide a grant of land to support the establishment of at least one institution of higher education in each state of the Union to teach the agricultural and mechanical arts. If Wisconsin agreed by July 2, 1867, to establish such an institution, it would receive a land grant of 240,000 acres, thirty thousand acres for each of its senators and representatives in Congress.[1] The federal government's offer confronted the Wisconsin legislature with the question of whether to establish a separate new institution, attach the agricultural and mechanical arts institution to the fourteen year old, struggling state university, or assign the land grant responsibility to an existing college operated by one of the religious denominations. Few legislators seemed disposed to reject the federal largesse out of hand.

John Wesley Hoyt, editor of The Wisconsin Farmer, led the fight for the immediate establishment of a separate, independent institution.[2] Hoyt and his supporters seriously questioned the validity of attaching the practical program to an institution devoted to the classical liberal arts. State Senator Anthony Van Wyck was among those who took this position, saying that "...I shall rejoice in the establishment of an institution in which the sons of farmers may be instructed in scientific principles, without those associations and influences which too often weaken their attachment to their own profession."[3]

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[1] Reprint of the Morrill Land Grant Act in University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, Annual Report, September 30, 1866, pp. 1 and 2 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

[2] J. W. Hoyt, "Our Proposed Agricultural College," The Wisconsin Farmer, XVI (January 1, 1864), pp. 1 and 2, and J. W. Hoyt, "A Bill to Incorporate the Agricultural College," The Wisconsin Farmer, XVI (March 1, 1864), pp. 125 and 126. See, also, "The Agricultural College in the Senate: Remarks of Senator Van Wyck," The Wisconsin Farmer, XVI (April 1, 1864), pp. 133-135.

[3] "The Agricultural College in the Senate: Remarks of Senator Van Wyck," The Wisconsin Farmer, XVI (April 1, 1864), p. 134.

Despite the efforts of Hoyt and the other advocates of a separate industrial college, the anticipated expense of establishing a new college combined with the fact that Wisconsin was involved in the nation's Civil War to delay action by the legislature. The Wisconsin Senate passed a bill in March of 1864 to establish a separate new practical institution of higher education only to see the Assembly reject the plan.[4] A similar bill the next year ran into difficulty, as some legislators attempted to attach the proposed new institution to Ripon College, a private college associated with the Congregational Church.[5] As the Civil War ended in 1865, then, the public versus religious higher education argument replaced the war argument in slowing action on establishing an agricultural and mechanical curriculum.

The failure of the legislature to act frustrated the proponents of industrial education. By the time the legislature opened in 1866, only one-and-a-half years remained of the five year period the federal government gave the states to act in order to receive the land grant. In January of 1866, John Hoyt was ready for some reasonable form of compromise that would provide for "... the establishment somehow and somewhere of some sort of an institution of learning organized with special reference to the industrial interests of the State and country."[6]

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[4] Wisconsin State Journal, Madison, Wisconsin, March 3, 1864, p. 1, and March 18, 1864, p. 1.

[5] Wisconsin State Senate, Journal of Proceedings, 17th Session, 1865, pp. 429, 430, 505, and 516.

[6] J. W. Hoyt, "The 240,000 Acres of College Lands for the Benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts," The Wisconsin Farmer, XVIII (January 1866), p. 1.

The University of Wisconsin had made little effort during this period to gain access to the land grant funds. Most of the professors of the classics probably feared chancing any change in the University's traditionalist approach to education although James D. Butler, professor of ancient languages, did write to the Governor in 1862 to suggest attaching the land grant responsibilities to the University of Wisconsin.[7] John H. Lathrop had more accurately reflected the faculty's attitude on his inauguration as University chancellor in 1850 when he pictured the University of Wisconsin as part of the movement to provide a "universal culture of the popular mind."[8] John W. Sterling, University vice-chancellor, put it more clearly in 1865: "The primary object of a State University, it seems to me, ought to be to furnish the means of acquiring a liberal education-- an essential-- if not the most important-- part of which is thorough classical training."[9] Lathrop and other faculty members argued that the University had to maintain high standards to create a reputation as a strong academic institution.[10] Since higher education at the time meant a classical education, the University of Wisconsin had to defend the educational status quo to hope for a good reputation in the field of higher education. This University of Wisconsin interest in classical education deterred the faculty from advocating the University's assumption of the land grant responsibilities, as it also discouraged proponents of practical education from looking to the University of Wisconsin as the site for the kind of education they desired.

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[7] J. D. Butler letter to Governor Edward Salomon, December 31, 1862, in Box 1, University Correspondence of the Executive Department of Administration, Series 1/1/15-5, Wisconsin State Archives (Wisconsin State Historical Society).

[8] Address by the Chancellor, "Inauguration of Hon. John H. Lathrop," (Milwaukee: Sentinel and Gazette Power Press Plant, January 16, 1850), p. 41, in University of Wisconsin, Regents' Reports, 1849-1860 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

[9] J. W. Sterling letter to Gentlemen of the Executive Committee of the Regents, August 9, 1865, in Papers of the Meetings of the Board of Regents, 1866, Box 7, Series 1/1/3 (University of Wisconsin Archives). In the first draft, Sterling claimed that the "first and highest aim" of a State University "is to furnish the means of acquiring a liberal education," etc. He softened this language somewhat in the final version of his letter. For a report on the kind of education offered by the University of Wisconsin, see Board of Regents, Second Annual Report, January 16, 1850, pp. 6-8, and Annual Report, September 30, 1863, pp. 3 and 4 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, however, was a realistic group. The members knew that the University desperately needed increased support to survive.[11] As early as 1851 they formulated a policy requesting that any funds for support of higher education in the agricultural or mechanical arts be appropriated for the expansion of the University of Wisconsin into this area-- a policy the Regents maintained through the years.[12] Arguing that agricultural and mechanical students should have the opportunity to associate in a cultural environment with those entering other professions, the Regents hoped that the University's "endowment may be so enlarged by National or State bounty, as to enable it to cover the whole ground to which it is entitled...."[13]

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[10] John H. Lathrop, Report to the Board of Regents, in Board of Regents, Fourth Annual Report, December 31, 1851, p. 9 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

[11] Conrad E. Patzer, Public Education in Wisconsin, (Madison, Wisconsin: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1924), pp. 231-234.

[12] Board of Regents, Third Annual Report, January 1, 1851, pp. 12-17 (University of Wisconsin Archives). See, also, Board of Regents, Fourth Annual Report, December 31, 1851, p. 5, Fifth Annual Report, December 31, 1852, p. 10, and Seventh Annual Report, December 31, 1854, p. 10.

In January of 1866 the faculty formally presented its thinking on the question of the federal land grant funds to the Regents. It presented a series of facts that were common knowledge. It described the financial condition of the University of Wisconsin as tenuous. It noted that Indiana University and Miami University of Ohio had received federal land grant endowments to establish colleges of agricultural and mechanical arts. "This has been done by a union of the university and agricultural endowments," the University of Wisconsin faculty added, "in such a way as is designed to render each more effective in accomplishing its specific object." After tracing these recognized facts for the Regents, the faculty left any decision up to the Regents, urging no particular course of action. It is probable that the faculty proceeded in this manner to avoid a showdown between the die-hard classicists and the political realists on the faculty who favored a change at the University of Wisconsin to attract increased support.[14] The Regents clearly could interpret the faculty position, as they were inclined to do, as supporting their stand favoring incorporation of the land grant funds and the new practical educational philosophy into the University of Wisconsin.

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[13] Board of Regents, Third Annual Report, January 1, 1851, pp. 16 and 17.

[14] Letter to the Board of Regents of the Wisconsin University, submitted in behalf of the faculty by J. W. Sterling, vice-chancellor, January 15, 1866, in Papers of the Meetings of the Board of Regents, 1866, Box 7, Series 1/1/3 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

While offering no recommendation as to "whether the effort should be made in Wisconsin to effect a similar union....," the faculty did make it clear that any such acceptance of the land grant responsibilities must allow for "preserving the true intent of both trusts," the land grant practical education and the traditional liberal arts curriculum.[15] Such defense of the classical curriculum by the University of Wisconsin faculty, liberal and conservative alike, was predictable. It was also essential if the University was to retain any liberal arts orientation. Advocates of practical education, now open to lodging the agricultural and mechanical arts college at the University of Wisconsin in this eleventh hour for acceptance of the land grant, were working to change the nature of the University. John Wesley Hoyt, the leader of the movement for an agricultural college in Wisconsin, also took leadership in the effort to give the University of Wisconsin a more practical orientation and to change it over from the classical liberal arts institution it had been throughout its existence. In a state convention in 1866 to encourage the legislature to establish an agricultural college, Hoyt urged support of a resolution favoring a reorganization of the University of Wisconsin and the assumption by the University of the land grant responsibilities.[16] Indicating that he had changed his original position in favor of a separate agricultural college because that proposal suffered defeat in two successive legislative sessions, Hoyt added that he expected the new practical curriculum gradually to take precedence in the existing University of Wisconsin.[17] Thus, the liberal arts professors had grounds for their concern that any reorganization of the University allow for "preserving the true intent" of the classical as well as the practical programs.

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[15] _Ibid_.

More in response to the press of time than to any groundswell of public sentiment, the Wisconsin legislature in 1866 passed a bill to reorganize the University of Wisconsin and attach the agricultural-mechanical responsibilities to it.[18] As part of the process of making the University a more practical institution, the legislature also called for the establishment by the University of an experimental farm.[19] Wisconsin thus received the 240,000 acres of land the federal government had set aside for it. The legislature acted on realistic economic grounds that the state probably could not afford to support a separate institution for agricultural and mechanical education. Nor did the legislature want to provide the land grant to one denominational college and not to the others. It attached the new practical responsibilities to the University of Wisconsin despite a large body of public opinion that the marriage of the agricultural and mechanical arts with the traditional classical curriculum was a "union of the living with the dead" that "would be certain to kill both."[20]

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[16] Wisconsin State Journal, February 8, 1866, p. 2.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Wisconsin State Senate, Journal of Proceedings, 18th Session, 1866, p. 1011.

[19] Act of Wisconsin Legislature Reorganizing the University of Wisconsin, in Board of Regents, Annual Report, September 30, 1866, pp. 4 and 5 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

This cynical attitude regarding the University of Wisconsin was accurate to the degree that changes in the basic liberal arts nature of the institution did not occur immediately upon receipt of the land grant responsibilities. Like most of the land grant colleges in their early years, whether separate or a part of a larger institution, the University of Wisconsin had a faculty drawn from existing universities, all of which were dedicated to the classics. Although the University did hire a professor of agriculture in 1868 to manage the experimental farm and offer courses in agriculture, the faculty's devotion to theoretical study and pure research for all students, rather than practical experience and applied research, alienated farmers.[21] So did the faculty's commitment to the study of the classics by all students, based on the belief that such study would develop "mental discipline."[22] Farmers and others interested in practical education for their children became increasingly disaffected from the University of Wisconsin.

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[20] Daily Milwaukee News, February 9, 1866, p. 13.

[21] Wilbur H. Glover, Farm and College, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), pp. 30 and 31.

The University faculty's commitment to classical education, even for those taking the "practical" agricultural and mechanical program, led to renewed agitation for separating the land grant responsibilities from the University of Wisconsin. Few farm boys studied agriculture at the University. The University's professor of agriculture, William A. Henry, complained to farmers in 1880 that only one farm boy was then studying agriculture at the University.[23] The State Agricultural Convention heard charges that "...of those who have been liberally educated, nine out of every ten have proved a total wreck, in consequence of habits formed while at college, separated from the moral and social influences of home."[24] And efforts intensified to establish a separate agricultural college. These efforts received the endorsement of Regent Hiram Smith and Professor of Agriculture William A. Henry of the University of Wisconsin.

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[22] Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, The University of Wisconsin: A History, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1949), Vol. 1, pp. 461-467.

[23] Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Transactions, 1880-81, XIX (Madison, Wisconsin: State Printer, 1881), p. 358.

[24] T. H. Eaton, Monroe, Wisconsin, "Education for the Farmer," paper read before the State Agricultural Convention, February, 1873, in Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Transactions, 1872-73, XI (Madison, Wisconsin: State Printer, 1873), p. 447.

Henry and Smith gave their backing to the separation of the land grant responsibility from the University of Wisconsin at an evening meeting of state farm leaders and government officials in Madison on November 25, 1884.[25] The group had also met in the afternoon when those in attendance expressed dissatisfaction with the University's agriculture department. They urged separation of the department from the University to achieve separate social and educational standards more in line with the values of farmers and an educational program geared more to the practical, rather than the theoretical, study of farming.[26] Out of this November, 1884, meeting would come Governor Jeremiah M. Rusk's recommendation to the next Wisconsin legislature "...that the time had come for the founding of a purely agricultural school." Rusk informed the legislature that "...such a school, devoted purely to training men to be better farmers, would operate to check the dangerous rush of farmer boys to the cities and into the professions; would in the end add dignity and power to the agricultural class, and would be beneficial to the people generally."[27]

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[25] Wisconsin State Journal, November 26, 1884, unnumbered p. 4.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Message of Governor Jeremiah M. Rusk to the Wisconsin Senate, January 14, 1885, in Wisconsin State Senate, Journal of Proceedings, 37th Session, 1885, p. 21.

With one of their own board members and one of their expert faculty members backing the efforts of farm groups and some legislators to separate the agricultural institution from the University, the Regents realized that their federal land grant was in jeopardy. If the University lost the land grant fund, it was unlikely to make the kind of advance as an institution that its Regents desired. And, even before the Governor sent his message recommending separation of the land grant responsibilities from the University of Wisconsin, the Board of Regents moved to retain its agricultural and mechanical interests and the land grant support. The Board recognized that to retain these responsibilities the University of Wisconsin would have to implement the land grant philosophy and operate on a more practical basis. The Board now took vigorous action to show the legislature and the people of Wisconsin that the University would provide the kind of education the people desired.

Chapter 3

THE EXTENSION UNITS DEVELOP INDIVIDUALLY

Exasperated by faculty opposition that blocked the University of Wisconsin from developing practical educational programs for farmers in 1884, University Regent Elisha Keyes reprimanded Professor of Agriculture William A. Henry for looking toward a separation of the Department of Agriculture from the University as the panacea instead of aggressively taking on the classics professors in behalf of a practical University of Wisconsin agricultural program. When Henry defended his inability to develop a more practical curriculum in the existing University environment, Keyes slammed his fist to the table and roared, "Damn you, Henry, if you can't do it, we will get someone here who can."[1]

Faced with this firm stand by the Regents, Henry soon re-evaluated his position and helped to develop a plan for a 12-week winter course in agriculture for farm youth of Wisconsin-- a course that eventually destroyed Henry's dream of a separate agricultural college. The University of Wisconsin Short Course program dropped the standard admission requirements and such non-practical studies as mathematics, German, rhetoric, English literature, constitutional law, and drawing.

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[1] Interview with Harry L. Russell by Wilbur H. Glover, April 9, 1945. See Wilbur H. Glover, "The Agricultural College Crisis of 1885," Wisconsin Magazine of History, XXXII (September 1948), p. 20, and Merle Curti and Vernon Carstensen, The University of Wisconsin: A History, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1949), Vol. I, p. 472, footnote 107.

Practical agriculture was to be the emphasis.[2] A special committee of University Regents justified the practicality and shortness of the course as adapting the University to the "needs and means" of young farm boys, affording them in their slack winter season "a well arranged and comprehensive understanding of such knowledge as has been wrought out for the practical instruction of farmers which may be advantageously taught in schools...."[3]

While some of the liberal arts classicists wrung their hands in despair and the advocates of a new and separate agricultural college sulked, the University Regents worked to win public acceptance of the University of Wisconsin as an institution devoted to the practical, vocational needs of the people as well as to a classical liberal arts program. They knew that if they succeeded in gaining this public acceptance, they would be in a better position to block efforts to detach the land grant from the University of Wisconsin.[4]

The success of the Regents in gaining faculty cooperation in development of the agricultural Short Course in 1885 was crucial in showing that the University of Wisconsin was willing to adapt itself to the needs of its constituency. Sensing a new cooperative spirit on the part of the University, the Wisconsin legislature in 1885 appropriated five thousand dollars to the University and asked it to conduct institutes for farmers throughout the state.[5] The Regents established a Farm Committee and hired William H. Morrison, president of the Dairymen's Association, to direct the institutes.[6] Morrison gave the program a strongly practical orientation, hiring a staff in which practicing farmers predominated.[7] Although the institutes called on University of Wisconsin agriculture department professors like William A. Henry to report on developments at the experimental farm and for other assistance, the institutes' connection with the University's agriculture department remained slight for several years. These institutes, conducted by farmers for farmers, won quick support. The University offered fifty-seven Farmers' Institutes in the fall and winter of 1886-1887.[8] In 1887 the legislature increased its support for the institutes from five thousand to twelve thousand dollars, enabling the University to increase the number of institutes to eighty-one in 1887-1888.[9] University of Wisconsin President Thomas C. Chamberlin told the Regents that fifty thousand farmers participated in the 1887-1888 institutes.[10] Given this University of Wisconsin cooperation, the efforts to separate the agriculture department from the University gradually abated.[11] The Short Courses and Farmers' Institutes, by showing that the University of Wisconsin was open to a practical approach, also increased the numbers enrolled in the residence Department of Agriculture, greatly strengthening that institution which in 1889 formally became the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin.[12] Not only did the new Farmers' Institutes enhance the University's College of Agriculture and overcome the agitation for a separate agricultural college, they also at last established the University of Wisconsin as an institution dedicated to practical education as much as to the classical liberal arts education. And they formed the basis of the University's continuing extension activities in agriculture.

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[2] Typescript of Hitt-Vilas Special Committee Report read to the board and accepted at the Board of Regents' Semi-Annual Meeting, Tuesday, January 20, 1885, unnumbered p. 5 (insert in University of Wisconsin Board of Regents Minutes, Series 1/1/1, Vol. III, University of Wisconsin Archives, between pp. 432 and 433).

[3] _Ibid._, unnumbered pp. 10 and 14.

[4] University of Wisconsin Board of Regents Minutes, Series 1/1/1, Vol. III, Record Book C, December 30, 1884, p. 427 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

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[5] Wisconsin State Assembly, Journal of Proceedings, 37th Session, 1885, pp. 59, 142, 263, and 664.

[6] University of Wisconsin Board of Regents Minutes, Series 1/1/1, Vol. III, Record Book C, pp. 443 and 444 (University of Wisconsin Archives), and Wilbur H. Glover, Farm and College, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), p. 108.

[7] Glover, Farm and College, p. 108.

[8] Report of President of the Faculty T. C. Chamberlin to the Regents, in Board of Regents Biennial Report, September 30, 1888, p. 55 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

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[9] Ibid., and Glover, Farm and College, p. 108.

[10] Report of President of the Faculty T. C. Chamberlin to the Regents, p. 55.

[11] For an example of how the Farmers' Institutes served to blunt efforts to separate the agricultural and mechanical responsibilities from the University, see Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, Transactions, XXVII (Madison, Wisconsin: State Printers, 1889), pp. 209 and 210.

[12] Glover, Farm and College, p. 111.

The leadership of the Regents in gaining cooperation from the faculty for the Short Course program and the success of the Farmers' Institutes prevented the development of a separate agricultural college in Wisconsin. The state thereby avoided the experience of many other states where an existing state university failed to respond to the practical needs and interests expressed by the people and their representatives. The University of Wisconsin thus prevented the diffusion of state funding of higher education that occurred in states that founded a separate college for practical agricultural and mechanical education. By its adaptability the University became the major focus of state support for higher education in Wisconsin.

Along with the development of the practical agricultural Short Course on the University of Wisconsin campus and the extension of Farmers' Institutes throughout the state, the late 1800's also witnessed an increasing interest on the part of Wisconsin communities in having University liberal arts faculty members come to present lectures and courses on a non-credit basis.[13] A number of University professors presented these cultural, General Extension lectures around the state in their "free" time.[14] But it was not until after the turn of the century that a trio of able librarians led the new University of Wisconsin president, Charles Van Hise, into support of a greatly expanded General Extension program providing both for cultural activities and for practical service in solving community and state problems.[15]

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[13] See Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Extension Work of the University of Wisconsin," George Francis James, ed., Handbook of University Extension, (Philadelphia: American Society for the Extension of University Teaching, 1893), pp. 311-324, for more background in this area. Turner was one of the participants.

[14] Ibid. See, especially, pp. 315-318 and 321.

After nearly ten years of increasing activity in extension, Van Hise could say in 1915 that service to the public through the Extension units was one of the University of Wisconsin's primary responsibilities.[16] The General Extension division provided community lectures and correspondence education in a wide range of practical and cultural subjects, excluding only agriculture which remained the province of the University's College of Agriculture. While Agricultural Extension continued to meet the practical needs of Wisconsin farmers, General Extension provided practical courses in Milwaukee for city wage earners and helped Wisconsin voters to educate themselves to local and national issues. General Extension also encouraged University of Wisconsin professors to serve as experts on state boards and commissions.[17] Its educational activities became a pillar in the progressive political reform program of Wisconsin Governor Robert M. La Follette.[18]

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[15] For documentation, see Curti and Carstensen, pp. 553 and 554, to whom I am indebted for this interpretation of Van Hise's development toward extension leadership. It was Van Hise who formally organized General Extension in 1907.

[16] Charles R. Van Hise, Proceedings of the First National University Extension Conference, Madison, Wisconsin, March 10-12, 1915, 1st Session, pp. 4-24.

[17] For a detailed study of General Extension in Wisconsin and its accomplishments, see Frederick M. Rosentreter, The Boundaries of the Campus (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1957).

By 1915 General Extension achieved national renown. Journalists praised the University's Extension program as uniting the University and Wisconsin's state government in an alliance on behalf of the people of Wisconsin.[19] The new reform mayor of Philadelphia in 1913 took his city council, the superintendent of schools, area college presidents, and more than a hundred educators, social workers, industrialists, businessmen, and clubwomen from Philadelphia to Madison to see how the University of Wisconsin did it by matriculating as students in Extension for four days. They wanted to experience for themselves the Wisconsin Idea at work.[20]

Even though the nation beat a path to Madison to honor the University for involving itself in the everyday life of its constituency, the University faculty did not fully accept this concept of a university, as President Van Hise acknowledged in 1915.[21] "Objection has been made to this undertaking [extension] by the university on the ground that it will involve work which is not of college grade," Van Hise wrote. "A further objection has been made that so far as the work is of university grade it cannot be done elsewhere as well as at the central institution."[22]

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[18] Robert M. La Follette, La Follette's Autobiography, (Madison, Wisconsin: The Robert M. La Follette Co., Second Edition, 1918), pp. 28-33.

[19] See, for example, Lincoln Steffens, "Sending A State to College," The American Magazine, LXVII (February 1909), pp. 349-364, and Frank Parker Stockbridge, "A University That Runs A State," The World's Work, XXV (April 1913), pp. 699-708.

[20] James S. Hiatt, "The Philadelphia Pilgrimage and the Wisconsin Idea," The American School Board Journal, XLVII (July 1913), pp. 26, 28, 29, and 32.

[21] See Charles Van Hise, Proceedings, especially pp. 9 and 16.

In order to make Extension effective in the face of this opposition, Van Hise's dean of General Extension, Louis E. Reber, had organized the division as a separate entity on the campus, taking over such formerly separate extension operations as those of the engineering and law colleges.[23] Reber believed that extension received short shrift in most of the campus residence departments. Professors in these departments tended to emphasize the instruction of resident students, Reber thought, and to neglect extending their expertise to the people who supported the University with their tax money.[24] But when Reber tried to impose his philosophy of extension organization on the College of Agriculture in 1907, he hit a stone wall.[25]

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[22] Ibid., p. 9.

[23] Curti and Carstensen, p. 580.

[24] Louis E. Reber, "Report of the University Extension Division to University of Wisconsin President Charles R. Van Hise," October 1, 1908, printed in University of Wisconsin, Biennial Report of the Board of Regents for the Years 1906-1907 and 1907-1908, pp. 182, 183, 187, and 198 (University of Wisconsin Archives).

[25] Interview with William Noble Clark, emeritus associate director of the University of Wisconsin Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin, November 3, 1967.

Unlike the law and engineering colleges, the College of Agriculture refused to merge its activities into Reber's General Extension division. Over the years of such informal agricultural extension activities as Farmers' Institutes and Short Courses for young farmers, Deans William A. Henry and Harry L. Russell had developed a philosophy of organization diametrically opposed to that of Reber's "separatist" operation. By 1907 Dean Russell planned to formalize agricultural extension operations as an integral part of the University's College of Agriculture.[26] Russell wrote that he wanted the college to rest on a three-legged foundation of research, teaching, and extension.[27]

The College of Agriculture proved a tough opponent for Reber and his organizational concept. Not only did Russell argue that an integral extension operation would aid the development of the College of Agriculture, he also questioned the competency of General Extension workers in dealing with farmers.[28] He thought that it was the specialized College of Agriculture that should meet the specialized needs of farmers. These same arguments, of course, might have been used by law, engineering, and other elements of the University if they had been interested enough in their extension activities to fight to keep them. The College of Agriculture's interest and continuing activity in the extension area were important motivations in its desire to maintain its own Extension operation. Also, administrative empire-building probably played a part in this early struggle between General Extension and Agricultural Extension. If General Extension could gather all extension activities under its control, it would gain further power and prestige. If the College of Agriculture lost control of the Agricultural Extension responsibility, the College might suffer a loss of power and prestige. Although Reber had the backing of President Van Hise in his efforts to take over Agricultural Extension, by 1909 College of Agriculture Dean Russell succeeded in rallying the University Board of Regents to the support of a formal Agricultural Extension operation integrated with the College of Agriculture.[29]

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[26] William Noble Clark, "Harry L. Russell: Pace-Setter in Agricultural College Administration," January 28, 1965, p. 6 (Noble Clark's files).

[27] Harry L. Russell letter to Kirk L. Hatch, March 9, 1909, quoted by Glover, Farm and College, p. 216, and Harry L. Russell, "Report of the Dean of the College of Agriculture," October 1, 1908, printed in University of Wisconsin, Biennial Report of the Board of Regents for the Years 1906-1907 and 1907-1908, p. 123.

[28] Clark interview.

In maintaining the College of Agriculture's control of Agricultural Extension, Russell could point to a clearly definable public with a strong political base in the legislature-- the farmer. The farmer, indeed, had specialized needs that resulted from his isolation and occupation. As the result of these factors and Russell's strong leadership, these two University of Wisconsin Extension operations, Agricultural and General, would operate independently of each other until merger in 1965. Russell's success in maintaining control over Agricultural Extension made the 1965 merger all the more difficult to achieve. The years of separate operation led to differences in approach by the two Extension units and to the development of two independent administrative bureaucracies which complicated merger efforts.

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[29] Clark, "Harry L. Russell," p. 6.

Lodged securely within the University's College of Agriculture, Agricultural Extension gained strength over the years. It, in turn, helped to build the popularity of the College of Agriculture. Agricultural Extension developed its own administrative staff and, starting in 1911, began placing its extension field agents in Wisconsin counties.[30] These agents, like E. V. Ryall, utilized informal educational approaches in solving the practical problems of Wisconsin farm people. Ryall in the 1920's was encouraging farmers in Adams County to improve their alfalfa stands by using lime. Ryall discovered a farmer who was willing to innovate and let his crop serve as a demonstration of the value of using lime. But the farmer had promised to buy his wife an adjustable dress form and, therefore, would not have enough money to buy the lime. Ryall told the farmer to spend the money on the lime, promising that he would arrange to demonstrate to the farmer's wife a way to make at no cost a better dress form than she could buy. Studying an Agricultural Extension home economics circular, Ryall made a dress form which he had his wife demonstrate to the farmer's wife. The farmer's wife learned how to make her own dress form thanks to Agricultural Extension. The farmer was able to buy his lime. And an Agricultural Extension demonstration project on the value of the use of lime got its start by means of the practical, informal educational approach of a county agent.[31] Along with the county agents, resident professors in the College of Agriculture also had responsibilities for extension work. Building on the tradition of the Farmers' Institutes, Agricultural Extension emphasized practical service to the farming interests of the state and helped to increase the popularity and strength of the College of Agriculture, as well as its own Extension organization. Agricultural Extension, funded as a regular part of the budget of the College of Agriculture, became a strong administrative entity in the University of Wisconsin.

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[30] Conrad E. Patzer, Public Education in Wisconsin, (Madison, Wisconsin: State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1924), p. 21.

While Agricultural Extension advanced steadily, the other Extension units experienced serious difficulties. General Extension, budgeted as a separate department to help it overcome the resistance of the classical liberal arts departments, advanced as long as it had the support of the central administration. After such founders and supporters as President Van Hise and Dean Reber left their posts in the University administration, though, the position of General Extension proved exposed.[32] No powerful University departments or colleges gave General Extension the administrative support and protection the College of Agriculture provided for Agricultural Extension. Unlike Agricultural Extension, General Extension had to compete for money and fight for continued existence on its own. General Extension's independent organizational structure, intended to give it freedom from traditional academic patterns, instead imposed a weakness that limited its flexibility.

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[31] Elwood R. McIntyre, Supplement to Fifty Years of Cooperative Extension in Wisconsin, 1912-1962, Agricultural Extension Circular 602, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, January, 1963), p. 21.

Partly because it wanted to prove itself to an unsympathetic faculty as academically sound and partly because of a need to raise its own budget by charging for its programs, after the Van Hise-Reber administration General Extension increasingly emphasized formal programs, such as off-campus University courses and correspondence instruction, for which it could charge fees. It was no longer able to provide the informal approaches of the better budgeted Agricultural Extension, such as person-to-person field agent visitations and radio reports that commanded no fees. Another factor leading General Extension to more traditional educational approaches than Agricultural Extension was the intensification by General Extension of its freshman-sophomore Centers program in the 1930's.[33] These Centers provided standard University courses at the freshman and sophomore levels in a series of communities around the state, growing from twelve Centers in the 1930's to thirty-four just after World War II.[34] The growth of this more formal side of General Extension dwarfed its community service activities and increasingly imposed such residence campus thought patterns as credits, examinations, prerequisites, and academic standards upon the supposedly flexible General Extension operation.

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[32] Van Hise died in 1918, and Reber retired in 1926.

[33] University of Wisconsin, "The University of Wisconsin Center System: Profile," handout brochure provided by the University Center System in 1964. General Extension established its first Extension Center in Milwaukee in 1923.

Adversity played an important part in draining General Extension of some of its former aggressiveness and creativity. During the economic crisis of the 1930's, for example, General Extension barely survived as a separate institution. Possibly in an attempt to overcome the Extension organization's administrative vulnerability, University of Wisconsin President Glenn Frank began tinkering with General Extension as he worked to bring the University through the Great Depression. Following the Agricultural Extension organizational model, Frank tried to integrate the General Extension unit more closely into University departments and colleges where, unlike the College of Agriculture, the traditional negative attitude toward Extension continued to prevail.[35] He encountered resistance from many in

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Chester Allen, "University Extension in Wisconsin," unpublished, typed manuscript, June, 1955, Vol. II, Chapter 7, pp. 14 and 15, and Chapter 8; Vol. III, Chapter 1 (University of Wisconsin Extension Library).

General Extension who fought to maintain the separate organizational pattern implemented by Louis Reber in the early days of General Extension.[36]

Frank got a fight, too, when he prepared to sacrifice the fledgling University radio station in what he seemed to feel was the best interest of the total University. The University station went on the air as the first educational radio operation in the country more than ten years earlier in January of 1921.[37] Like General Extension, the special radio committee which held responsibility for the station since March of 1922 was a separate entity. No strong department looked out for it or for its radio interest. And when commercial radio broadcasters put pressure on Frank to give up the radio channel, he was prepared to make the sacrifice.[38] After four years of interim financing by the State Emergency Board, Frank in 1935 rejected any further interest by the University of Wisconsin in the radio station. He argued that radio was not an integral function of the University.[39]

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[36] Ibid.

[37] John S. Penn, "The Origin and Development of Radio Broadcasting at the University of Wisconsin," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1959, p. 137. The station, first known as 9XM, operated as an experimental broadcasting station from 1917 on. On January 3, 1921, it began to broadcast on a regular basis. On January 13, 1922, the station received new call letters, WHA, the designation it continued to hold to the present time.

[38] Interview with Harold McCarty, former long-time head of the University's radio operation, University of Wisconsin, July 21, 1965.

[39] Penn, pp. 352 and 415-417.

Frank failed to achieve either the integration of General Extension into the existing departments of the University or the elimination of the educational radio operation. When he omitted the radio station from his budget for the University in 1935, the state administration shifted the station to the budget of the State Department of Agriculture and Markets until 1941.[40] During this period, however, the station remained under the care of the University's radio committee.[41] The station again became a direct part of the University and the University budget only after Frank's departure from the University. Frank's efforts to make General Extension a more integral part of the University resulted in discord within the institution. They also led by 1935 to a politically motivated investigation into subversion at the University of Wisconsin and ultimately to Frank's resignation.[42] Instead of cutting unwieldy organizational appendages from the University by eliminating radio and integrating General Extension into the departmental operations of the University on the pattern of

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[40] Ibid., p. 416.

[41] Ibid., pp. 417 and 418, and McCarty interview. For a detailed account of the involved dealings of Frank and the state government regarding the statio radio station, see Penn, pp. 415-421, and University Radio Committee, Third Annual Report, October, 1941 (Harold McCarty's files).

[42] Allen, Vol. II, Chapter 7, pp. 14 and 15, and Chapter 8; also Vol. III, Chapter 1.

Agricultural Extension, Frank succeeded only in shattering the morale of both the radio and General Extension units and in weakening their contributions to the University and to the state.[43]

Nevertheless, forces were at work which would eventually change the organizational structure of all three of these Extension units. The change would not come in the elimination of the separate radio and General Extension operations, as Frank desired. Rather, the change would bring these two units together with Agricultural Extension in a separate, merged University Extension of greatly increased strength and stature. Thirty years would be needed, though, before such a change took place.

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[43] Ibid., Vol. III, Chapter 1, pp. 3, 4, 11, and 12, and McCarty interview.

Chapter 4

THE BACKGROUND FOR MERGER

While such separately operated University of Wisconsin Extension units as radio and General Extension proved exposed and underwent a series of difficulties after 1930 that tended to retard their former aggressive and innovative natures, Agricultural Extension operated as an integral element in the University's College of Agriculture and grew strong during this same period. So effective did Agricultural Extension appear to be that one University of Wisconsin administration after another attempted to impose the Agricultural Extension organizational pattern on General Extension, trying to integrate General Extension's programs into the departments of the University just as the College of Agriculture integrated Agricultural Extension into its activities. General Extension continued to fight a rear-guard action against this approach until it became clear that Agricultural Extension's strength, though real enough in terms of the administrative power structure at the University, was illusory in the face of long-term political, economic, and social trends in the nation. With this recognition also came added impetus for merger of Agricultural Extension, radio-TV, and General Extension.

A crucial factor in the apparently increasing organizational strength of Agricultural Extension was its regular receipt of federal funds after passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. By requiring states to match the federal grants, this act encouraged state-county-federal cooperation in agricultural extension work. Only land grant colleges could participate in the program. And since the University of Wisconsin was the only land grant college in Wisconsin, the University's Agricultural Extension Service benefitted from an increase in financial resources and from an increased involvement of local county boards in the Extension program.

One of the major motivating forces behind the Smith-Lever Act was concern over the flight of the nation's farmers from the land to the cities. Congressmen feared that a fast-diminishing rural population would be unable to feed the rapidly increasing urban masses. They expressed concern, too, that the nation's traditional rural way of life would disappear unless Congress provided federal support for agricultural extension work around the country that would enhance farm living and make it competitive with city life.[1] To keep people on the farm, maintain the rural way of life, and provide for a sufficient food supply, Congress seemed to feel that agricultural extension should emphasize the introduction of scientific methods of farming and management. In the words of Congressman Asbury Lever of South Carolina:

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[1] For discussion providing insights into Congressional motivations for supporting the Smith-Lever bill, see the Congressional Record--House, 63d Congress, 2d Session, January 19, 1914, pp. 1932-1947, and the Congressional Record--Senate, 63d Congress, 2d Session, February 6, 1914, p. 3036.

> ...we have accumulated in the agricultural colleges and in the Department of Agriculture sufficient agricultural information which, if made available to the farmers of this country and used by them, would work a complete and absolute revolution in the social, economic and financial condition of our rural population.... This bill [Smith-Lever Act] proposes to set up a system of general demonstration teaching throughout the country, and the agent in the field...is to be the mouthpiece through which this information will reach the... [farmer]....by going onto his farm under his own soil and climatic conditions and demonstrating...a method which surpasses his in results.[2]

University agricultural extension agencies around the country, including the University of Wisconsin's Agricultural Extension Service, gained these federal funds and operated on the conventional wisdom underlying this bill and other such efforts to improve agriculture. As well as providing home economics information and other aid desired by farmers and their families, Agricultural Extension in Wisconsin and elsewhere worked to gain acceptance by the farmer of scientific agriculture and of scientific farm management techniques. Such measures, it was assumed, would increase production, thus increase income and thereby provide a higher standard of living for farmers and an increased incentive for Americans to stay on the farm. Agricultural Extension policy makers apparently assumed that increased production would both feed the city masses and maintain a rural way of life within American society.

That Agricultural Extension aided in convincing farmers to adopt the new methods can hardly be doubted. Evidence abounds, also, to show that the improved methods increased production. What is also quite clear now is that by increasing production by encouraging scientific farming methods, Agricultural Extension added its own impetus to the trend toward fewer family farmers, toward "factory agriculture," and toward a destruction of the very way of life it was dedicated to maintaining.

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[2] Congressional Record--House, 63d Congress, 2d Session, January 19, 1914, p. 1937.

Its commitment to scientific agriculture and scientific farm management concepts meant that Agricultural Extension would encourage the use of machinery, chemical fertilizers, and other advanced methods of farming. To make the use of machinery efficient; to enable economical purchases of fertilizers, insecticides, and other such farm aids, farmers would require larger farms. And a trend toward larger private holdings eventually was bound to lead to a cutthroat struggle among farmers for the limited amount of good farmland and, indeed, for survival.

The need for larger holdings for increased efficiency, combined with the availability of limited amounts of good farmland, insured eventual displacement of large numbers of farmers as more aggressive and more successful neighbors expanded their farms at the expense of the less effective farmers. Such increased competition was also likely to drive the poorer soil out of farm use altogether and those living on such land out of farming. The logical place for these displaced farmers would be the cities. Increased numbers of city dwellers would mean necessary expansion of city and suburb into formerly rural countryside and further displacement of farmers who could profit more by selling their land than by farming it. These developments, clear in hindsight, were apparently not anticipated by Agricultural Extension or its supporters.[3]

By 1948 those responsible for studying national Agricultural Extension programs, policies, and goals acknowledged that expanding mechanization might harm farm families that lacked ability or capital to compete successfully. And these policy setters recommended that Agricultural Extension ought to help ease the adjustment of those who were "not able to take full advantage of technological advancement," aiding them to find other jobs.[4] Agricultural Extension was not ready then, as it is not ready now, to admit that it was as much the failure of its own program to maintain the rural way of life for vast numbers of Americans as it was the failure of the many who left the farm. Such departures from the farm in large numbers were inevitable because of the expansion required for a farmer to utilize successfully the new agricultural techniques that Agricultural Extension was encouraging. The question was simply which individuals would succeed and which would fail. The 1948 national report acknowledging the existence of the individual "failures" was smugly unaware of any responsibility by Agricultural Extension for the situation.

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[3] Some Congressmen, for example, said they thought the Smith-Lever Act would bring uncultivated wasteland into production, but the amount of land under cultivation in the U.S. leveled off, then fell during the twentieth century. Instead of cultivating more land, farmers increased their yield per acre more than enough to meet demand.

[4] U.S. Department of Agriculture and Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, Joint Committee on Extension Programs, Policies and Goals Report, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, August, 1948), pp. 58 and 59.

Several factors probably contributed to this apparent lack of recognition by Agricultural Extension of its own role in the destruction of the farmer. As a result of its dedication to technology and farm expansion, Agricultural Extension became wedded to the successful farmer, the "remnant" that was able and willing to adhere to approaches advocated by Agricultural Extension. Agricultural Extension, therefore, could be expected to reflect the middle class values it had helped to become dominant in rural America. A second factor in this unwillingness to see its own failure was the psychological need for Agricultural Extension to justify itself and its actions over the years by seeing only the successful aspect of its work--the relatively small but apparently strong middle class farmer it had helped to create. And Agricultural Extension workers within the organization who may quietly have recognized the organization's responsibility in the flight of the farmer from the land could rationalize the move of many of the "failures" to the city as improving the lives of these people. But helping rural people find a "good life" in the city was not what Agricultural Extension or many of the Smith-Lever Law backers had in mind as the goal of the Agricultural Extension service.

In Wisconsin, as elsewhere, the number of farms decreased in numbers but increased in size over the years.[5] It was the logical outcome of the economics of the situation and of the policies of Agricultural Extension. By the 1960's the efficient commercial family farm usually possessed two hundred or more crop acres.[6] The "inefficient" producer often dropped out of farming. From 1920 to 1962 the rural farm population fell more than forty per cent in Wisconsin while both the urban and the rural non-farm population more than doubled.[7] In 1968 the movement away from the farm in Wisconsin and the U.S. continued at the most rapid pace in history.[8]

Agricultural Extension workers have taken pride in the strong "mom and pop" commercial farm operations that proved the fittest in the struggle for survival encouraged by Agricultural Extension's policies, terming these commercial ventures the American family farms. But, despite their strengths, these farms faced a new challenge in the

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[5] William Noble Clark, "Who Will Operate Our Commercial Farms in 1975?," Lecture at the University of Wisconsin, November 19, 1964, pp. 9 and 17.

[6] Ibid., p. 3. The Agricultural Experiment Station Research Bulletin 241, Wisconsin's Population Changes and Prospects, 1900-1963, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, March 1963), p. 30, showed that in Wisconsin the average farm size increased from 117 acres in 1920 to 161.2 acres in 1959.

[7] The Agricultural Experiment Station Research Bulletin 241, p. 5. Rural farm population in Wisconsin in 1920 was 915,237. By 1962 it was 519,590. Urban dwellers in 1920 numbered 1,244,858. In 1962 they had increased to 2,638,065. Rural non-farm population increased from 471,972 in 1920 to 906,590 in 1962.

[8] Ibid., p. 6.

1960's--the corporate farm. Pioneered by such corporations as CBK Industries and Gates Rubber Company, these new ventures have bought farmlands around the country and hired managers and traveling gangs of farmhands to work these holdings.[9] This development may well augur the introduction of a more efficient farm factory operation. If corporations are able eventually to combine their efficient farming operations with ownership of packing plants and city supermarkets, corporate farming could provide a factory-to-home production and marketing efficiency that the family farms could never achieve.

The president of the National Farmers Organization, Oren Lee Staley, acknowledged the problem the family farmer confronted in 1968, warning that "Unless the family type farmer joins together to get a fair price for his product, corporate farming is inevitable."[10] Unlike some farm leaders, Staley accepted the premise that corporate farming possessed inherent advantages for efficient operation. Other farm organization lobbyists attempted to prove the inefficiency of the corporate farm by showing its failure to make profits in its pioneer stage.[11] None the less, just as the commercial family farm had proved more efficient than the smaller farms, it appeared in 1968 that the potentially more efficient farm-to-market factories, or corporate farms, would eventually replace the commercial family farms in many lines of agricultural commerce. And a number of agricultural economists favored such a development, looking forward to a nation of five hundred thousand farms rather than the present 3.5 million and the nearly seven million of twenty years ago.[12] This was the point to which the nation's desire and Agricultural Extension's desire for maintaining the family farm had led by 1968.

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[9] Josef H. Hebert, "U.S. Farmers Join to Oppose 'Corporate Farms' Threat," The Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin, January 4, 1968, p. 16.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] National Farmers Union, "The Myth of Corporate Efficiency," Washington Newsletter, XIV (December 1, 1967).

What the national Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service did in the nation and what the University of Wisconsin's Agricultural Extension program accomplished in Wisconsin was to encourage orderly change in the society. By giving the small farmer the feeling that some agency was on his side and, indeed, helping some farmers to get ahead in the struggle for survival on the farm, Agricultural Extension helped defuse a possible farm revolt at a time when farmers had extensive political power because of their numbers. Agricultural Extension was among the institutions giving hope to farmers that, as individuals, they might survive and rise by hard work and diligence even though their neighbors failed. Now, as some recognition developed among farmers in the 1960's that they might all be in a dying family industry, their political power had waned. The United States Supreme Court's one-man, one-vote concept, when fully implemented, may supply the final blow to farm political power in the U.S. Even if farmers mustered enough strength to block corporate farming for a time, it was clear in the 1960's that the family commercial farm lacked the capacity to mass produce as efficiently as a mature, experienced corporate farming operation. And it appeared that eventually the industry of the countryside, farming, would experience changes similar to those that occurred earlier in the industry of the cities-- the development of large, integrated manufacturing plants for mass production complemented by smaller commercial operations for specialty products. In the country it would be mass production corporate farming of the biggest crops, with a much reduced number of smaller family commercial farms supplying specialty crops. If corporate farming proved profitable, one could expect American industry to move into it in a big way since profits attract business enterprise. Thus, Agricultural Extension's approaches have been helping to phase out family farming and the once traditional rural way of life. At the same time, by helping to reduce the number of small farmers, Agricultural Extension was destroying its own reason for being.

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[12] Hebert, The Capital Times, January 4, 1968, p. 16.

It took a considerable period of time for the University of Wisconsin's organizational structure to reflect the new realities of American life. As late as 1943, during World War II, the organizational strength of Agricultural Extension appeared impregnable. Indeed, University President Clarence A. Dykstra seemed so impressed by Agricultural Extension that he encouraged discussions in November of

1943 that might have resulted in a campus-wide Extension operation modeled after Agricultural Extension.[13] Dykstra appeared strongly sympathetic to the Agricultural Extension organizational concept that made public service an integral part of the residence colleges and departments.[14] At least one of the General Extension representatives at the November meeting believed that "high-level pressures were at work to merge somehow...[General] Extension more completely-- and subserviently-- into the University on-campus organization."[15] These efforts failed. General Extension maintained its separate identity, refusing to merge with campus departments on the pattern set by the Agricultural Extension Service's organizational relationship with the College of Agriculture. It is possible that the antipathy of many of the other colleges and departments to extension work helped to take the steam out of the effort by some of the higher level administrators to accomplish what looked good on paper but which administrators like Louis Reber had sensed would fail in practice in most departments.[16] At any rate, General Extension in 1943 was able to avoid merger according to the Agricultural Extension pattern despite the apparent strength of Agricultural Extension and the attraction of its organizational concepts to the University's top administration.[17]

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[13] Chester Allen, "University Extension in Wisconsin," unpublished, typed manuscript, Vol. III, Chapter 13, p. 5 (University of Wisconsin Extension Library). Allen was one of the participants in these discussions.

[14] Ibid., p. 6.

[15] Ibid., p. 7.

[16] See above, p. 36.

Merger of the Extension units would, nevertheless, occur twenty-two years later. It would not slavishly copy the Agricultural Extension pattern since the change in the agricultural situation had become clearly recognizable by then and the General Extension organizational pattern had regained some of its lustre in the meantime. Merger in Extension at the University of Wisconsin would come under the leadership of Fred Harvey Harrington as a first step toward a more effective role for the University in solving Wisconsin's urban and rural economic, social, and community problems. It would try to combine the organizational features both of Agricultural Extension and of General Extension. And it would attempt to maintain the University of Wisconsin as a primary public institution, generously supported, to meet the needs of its society.

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[17] During Conrad A. Elvehjem's presidency of the University from 1958 to 1962, another abortive attempt was made to merge the Extension operations under Agricultural Extension. (The Extension administrator who provided this information asked to remain unidentified.)

Chapter 5

TOWARD A MORE EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICE

Fred Harvey Harrington, an historian, fund raiser, and administrator at the University of Wisconsin, became president of the University in August of 1962 after ten years of service in increasingly important administrative posts.[1] During these earlier years in the University's administration, Harrington developed a broad understanding of trends in the nation, of the university's role in its society, and of the approaches necessary to obtain funds, especially federal funds, for support of a university.[2] During his administrative career Harrington also created an image of himself as a friend of the various Extension outreach units on the campus.[3] He would need this image when, in the interests of the society and the University, he moved to combine the Extension units soon after assuming the University presidency.

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[1] Biographical Information Sheet, Statewide Communication Service, University of Wisconsin, 1968. Harrington had been chairman of the University of Wisconsin history department from 1952 to 1955, special assistant to the president of the University with responsibility for fund raising from 1956 to 1958, vice-president for academic affairs from 1958 to 1962, and vice-president of the University in 1962.

[2] Author's conclusions based on an interview with Fred Harvey Harrington, University of Wisconsin, February 7, 1968, and on Harrington's articles and speeches on these subjects. See "University Extension: Challenge and Opportunity for the Urban University," The NUEA Spectator, XXXIII (October-November 1967), pp. 5 and 6; "The University and the State," The New Outreach of the University, Proceedings of the Annual University Extension Faculty Conference, October 11-14, 1966, pp. 17-21, and "Adult and Continuing Education," in Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, eds., Designing Education for the Future #2, (New York: Citation Press, 1967), pp. 129-140.

[3] Interviews with Harold McCarty, former head of the radio-TV unit, University of Wisconsin, October 26, 1967, and with Henry Ahlgren, former head of Agricultural Extension, University of Wisconsin, November 3, 1967.

Merger should not have come as a surprise to the leadership of the Extension units, yet it seems to have caught them at least emotionally unprepared.[4] In hindsight the directors of the General Extension unit and the Agricultural Extension unit said they should have expected it intellectually. The justification for some kind of merger had existed for years.[5] Indeed, as early as 1955, General Extension publicly reported that "Explorations are underway with agricultural Extension to determine how best to make the total Extension services of the University available to the people of the state."[6]

The split between the two Extensions had clearly become an anachronism. While the large farm population and a lack of rapid communications and transportation may have required unique services for farmers in the first third of the twentieth century, by the 1950's new conditions existed. Radio and TV communicated as immediately with the rural population as with those who lived in cities. Rapid airplane, bus, and private automobile transportation linked countryside and urban area. Urban sprawl was eating up large portions of the nation's farmland. Farmers were leaving for the cities. Those who remained often found city professionals and businessmen buying adjoining farm property and turning it into a summer vacation retreat or a home from which to commute long distances to work. And the nation by then was planning to solve many of its problems through regional programs that included rural areas, small towns, and large cities.

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[4] Interview with Lorentz Adolfson, former head of General Extension, September 18, 1967.

[5] Ahlgren and Adolfson interviews.

[6] University of Wisconsin General Extension Division, The Extension of University Teaching and Research, Annual Report of the University Extension Division, 1954-55, (Madison, Wisconsin, December, 1955), p. 6.

As the farm-city dichotomy blurred, so did that between the two Extension units. Separate administrative agencies of a single university increasingly served the same people, potentially with competitive programs. The University of Wisconsin's General Extension division recognized that the regional planning activities of its Bureau of Community Development by necessity included rural areas. It reported in 1955 that a rural regional development program it was conducting had involved two Agricultural Extension county agents in leadership posts and had consulted with the county agents in all participating counties. It quoted the Bureau of Community Development's statement that "The Bureau has made a sincere effort to keep the College of Agriculture informed of all programs in which they might have a possible interest. Most of our cooperative relations with the College have been on a person-to-person basis rather than on a top-policy level." General Extension termed this "informal cooperation" between the two Extension units.[7]

As General Extension moved out into the country with programs that included an agricultural orientation, Agricultural Extension began to follow the farmer into the city with lawn care programs for suburbanites, with 4-H youth programs that former farm families knew back on the farm, and with other programs for city and suburban dwellers.[8] University of Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Director Henry Ahlgren was chairman of the national Agricultural Extension Committee on Organization and Policy that in 1958 issued what became known as the Scope Report.[9] This report set the philosophical and legal base for Agricultural Extension's expansion into city and suburb. It interpreted the Smith-Lever Act and its legislative history as mandating the Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service to serve all the people of the United States, not only the farmer and his family. The Scope Report opened the way to broader service by Agricultural Extension throughout the country and, unwittingly, to mergers with General Extension in various parts of the country, including Wisconsin.

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[7] Ibid. Most of the General Extension-Agricultural Extension cooperation was in the area of cultural programs of music, drama, and art. Informal public service work gained increased stature in General Extension at the start of the 1960's when the Ford Foundation provided a million dollar grant for General Extension to conduct several pilot programs in community development.

[8] See Cooperative Extension Service, A Guide to Wisconsin's Cooperative Extension Programs for the Future, University of Wisconsin, January, 1961.

[9] Bryant E. Kearl, The Cooperative Extension Service Today: A Statement of Scope and Responsibility, April, 1958.

The top leadership of both General Extension and Agricultural Extension in Wisconsin were resigned to a gradual growing together of the two units. Intellectually, they saw such a development as inevitable, given the blurring both of the urban-rural patterns of life and of the responsibilities of the two units.[10] Both, however, seem to have thought more in terms of an eventual federation-- many years in the future-- that would perpetuate their organizations as separate units.[11]

University of Wisconsin President Harrington, also, saw the overlapping of administrative superstructure in Extension that might be wasting support funds. He recognized, further, that it might enhance his efforts for increased federal support of a wide range of extension activities if he could show that the University of Wisconsin and other universities were laying groundwork for effective use of such funds.[12] He saw, too, that the rapid decline of the state's farm population had weakened the farm bloc's statewide power and, just as important, the power of the University's College of Agriculture. Reduced enrollments in colleges of agriculture around the nation meant that these colleges might be unable to maintain separate Extension units.[13] After all, it had been a struggle for the College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin to keep its Agricultural Extension unit out of the hands of an aggressive General Extension director early in the twentieth century when farmers held extensive political power in the state.[14] While University of Wisconsin President Charles Van Hise had failed to attain a merged Extension then because of the College of Agriculture's political power, in 1963 President Harrington saw conditions existing under which he could accomplish merger. Indeed, as he saw it, merger was necessary for the good of the total University of Wisconsin.[15]

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[10] Ahlgren and Adolfson interviews.

[11] *Ibid*.

[12] See Chapter 1.

Harrington had to move quickly for merger in 1963 to strengthen his hand in seeking federal support for University extension programs dedicated to solving economic, social, and community problems. He viewed this extension approach as a third major responsibility of the University of Wisconsin, complementing its research and resident instruction.[16] Harrington knew that the federal government was tiring of putting its funds into pure research.[17] It wanted action programs to solve the nation's problems. If the universities could not or would not deal with this area, the government would fund other institutions, or perhaps create new mechanisms to do the job.[18] Believing that the university was the proper center for such activities, Harrington moved to stake out a claim on federal funds in this problem-solving area, using Extension merger as one means of strengthening his case.

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[13] Loren H. Osman, Milwaukee Journal, November 12, 1961.

[14] See Chapter 3.

[15] Harrington interview.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Fred Harvey Harrington, "The University and the State," The New Outreach of the University, Proceedings of the Annual University Extension Faculty Conference, October 11-14, 1966, pp. 20 and 21.

The first step in the merger was Harrington's action in 1963 recommending transfer of the eight remaining freshman-sophomore Centers from the administration of General Extension and the establishment of a separate University Center System as of July 1, 1964.[19] Approval of this recommendation by the Regents removed the hold of the campus residence departments on General Extension, enabling General Extension to ignore the traditional academic concerns that had hindered its recent development as an agency of applied research and social action.

Even though Harrington was moving the University rapidly toward Extension merger, it was still a shock to Agricultural Extension Director Henry Ahlgren and General Extension Director Lorentz Adolfson when the University president invited them to his office in 1963 to tell them that he was appointing a committee to develop a plan for merging the two Extension units and the radio-TV services of the University.[20] Before moving ahead, Harrington had sounded out the University Regents on his plan. From time to time at the Regents' meetings, Harrington had informally discussed his thinking about Extension merger, the changing emphasis of federal support, and the potential for the University in public service programs.[21] He sensed especially strong support for his plans to strengthen the University's Extension operations from Regent Gilbert Rohde, head of the Wisconsin Farmers Union who was committed to the extension concept, and from Regent Jacob Friedrick, a man with strong labor union background with commitment to General Extension's School for Workers.[22] And he knew that the directors of the various Extension units were coming around to a view of some sort of merger as eventually inevitable.[23]

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[18] Harrington interview.

[19] Minutes of the Meeting of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, President's Office, Madison, Wisconsin, September 6, 1963, pp. 17 and 18 (Records Office, 421 Administration Building, University of Wisconsin).

Harrington officially set a policy of merger on September 6, 1963, with a request to the Regents that they endorse his merger recommendation after which he would appoint a group to study the situation and submit an organizational plan for the merger.[24] The Regents voted to

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[20] Ahlgren interview.

[21] Harrington interview. Also, interview with Clarke Smith, Secretary of the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents, fall, 1967.

[22] Harrington interview.

[23] Author's inference from Harrington interview and from Adolfson interview.

[24] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, President's Office, September 6, 1963, pp. 17 and 18 (Records Office, 421 Administration Building, University of Wisconsin).

"approve in principle the establishment of an Extension Division to include agricultural and general extension and Radio and television ....," thus establishing a policy sought by various University of Wisconsin administrators since 1907.[25] Now, in 1963, some 56 years later, the University of Wisconsin Regents finally accepted the merger concept. The next step would be the formulation of a merger plan by the faculty committee the Regents had authorized.

On a Saturday evening in the fall of 1963 University of Wisconsin political science Professor Ralph Huitt received a telephone call from the University vice-president, Robert L. Clodius. Clodius told him that President Harrington wanted Huitt to be chairman of the Extension Reorganization Committee.[26] Harrington wanted an able man in the chairmanship who had no organizational or emotional tie to any one of the Extension units.[27] Huitt reacted cautiously:

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[25] Ibid., p. 18.

[26] Interview with Ralph Huitt, assistant secretary of the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, University of Wisconsin, October 19, 1967.

[27] Harrington interview.

> I wasn't particularly happy with the assignment because I've studied politics a long time, and I think the most difficult political problem...is... putting together a couple of on-going concerns.... There's the problem of who is going to get what jobs. There's a problem of whose prestige is going to suffer. There's a problem of which organizational structures and procedures...[are to be used]. There's a devotion of the constituency to each side....[28]

Still, Huitt accepted the chairmanship, pleasing President Harrington who believed that Huitt's personality and "sense of the possible" would be important in gaining committee concurrence in some form of merger.[29]

President Harrington then selected the membership of Huitt's committee.[30] They were Extension staff members in the middle range of leadership in their respective units. With the mandate that they would reorganize the extension services into one University Extension and with the committee composed of "people who still had a future at Extension and people who put the extension idea of service to the state ahead of their loyalty to their own organization," Huitt believed it would be possible for his committee to develop an effective merger plan.[31]

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[28] Huitt interview.

[29] Harrington interview.

[30] Huitt interview.

[31] Ibid. Other committee members besides Huitt were Thomas B. Averill, Robert N. Dick, and George B. Strother of General Extension; Quentin Schenk of the University's Milwaukee campus, and John A. Schoenemann, Dorothy H. Strong, and Gale L. VandeBerg of Agricultural Extension.

Huitt took an educational approach with the committee, bringing in for presentations and discussion such resources as federal Agricultural Extension representatives, administrators who had developed mergers in their own states, and leaders of the different University of Wisconsin Extension units. Huitt said he wanted to avoid possible political struggle within the various Extension units and between their constituencies and the University over the plan for merger.[32] To succeed in this, he said, he needed to build an attitude of confidence and mutual respect among the committee members and a feeling that the committee would "operate with perfect fairness." "[My] strategy... was to meet and meet and meet, and talk and talk and talk, and the committee members were agreeable."[33]

A year-and-a-half later, in May of 1965, the Huitt Committee presented its recommendations. These proposals for the new organization were brief and simple. The committee decided against presenting a detailed organizational blueprint that might have divided the committee or that would have tied the hands of an administrator of the new merged University Extension.[34] The committee's proposals included recommendations "to make an Extension career professionally rewarding:"

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid. and Report and Recommendations of the Extension Reorganization Committee to the President of the University of Wisconsin, May 12, 1965 (Extension Chancellor's office, University of Wisconsin).

establishment of a program providing research assistance and leaves for study for Extension personnel; creation of new University committees with an understanding of Extension's importance that would be available to pass on promotions and tenure of Extension personnel. It recommended the continuation of the Agricultural Extension county office concept, but called for these offices to represent the entire University, not just the College of Agriculture. The goal of the new University Extension would be the integration of the extension function in the University of Wisconsin with research and campus teaching. To achieve this goal the Huitt Committee encouraged a mix of integrated Extension departments on the Agricultural Extension pattern and of autonomous departments on the old General Extension pattern. The committee thought autonomous operations might be necessary where Extension desired an interdisciplinary approach or where two or more of the University's campuses had a department in a given discipline. At any rate, it called for joint appointments between University Extension and campus departments to allow close ties between the campuses and Extension even in autonomous Extension departments. The Huitt Committee's most important contribution, however, was to endorse the creation of "a genuine merger" under the administration of a strong Extension chancellor equal in rank to the chancellors of the University's Madison campus, Milwaukee campus, and Center System.

The Huitt Committee forwarded its recommendations to University of Wisconsin President Harrington at a time of struggle between General Extension Director Theodore Shannon and Agricultural Extension Director Henry Ahlgren and their supporters for the position of chancellor of the new University Extension.[35] The Huitt Committee found itself in the midst of this controversy when asked to recommend individuals to the administration for the Extension chancellor position.[36] Because Huitt was in a hurry to leave Madison to embark on his new position as an assistant secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in Washington, D.C., and because Harrington apparently believed immediate action was necessary, Huitt met with Harrington and Vice-President Clodius, then with available members of his committee and developed a list of eight names for presentation to Harrington for selection.[37] At least three members of the Huitt Committee were not available at the time the committee met and were contacted by telephone for their approval.[38] Backers of one or the other of the directors of the existing Extension divisions would later point to this rush decision as "railroading," for neither Henry Ahlgren nor Theodore Shannon received appointment as Extension chancellor.[39] The position went, instead, to a close associate of President Harrington who had been a part of the president's central administrative group for nearly three years.

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[35] Shannon had moved up within General Extension in 1964 when Lorentz Adolfson became chancellor of a separate University of Wisconsin Center System after the Regents removed the Centers from the control of General Extension.

[36] Interview with Donald R. McNeil, chancellor of University Extension, October 5 and 26, 1967. Also, author's inference from interview with Gale VandeBerg, January 25, 1968.

[37] Huitt and Harrington interviews. Loren H. Osman, Milwaukee Journal, October 16, 1965, Part 2, p. 10, reported that the Huitt Committee recommended Henry Ahlgren, head of Agricultural Extension; Bryant Kearl, professor of agricultural journalism and associate dean of the Graduate School; Gale VandeBerg, assistant director of Agricultural Extension; George Sledge, assistant to the dean of agriculture; Wilson Thiede, professor of education and former associate dean of the School of Education; Lorentz Adolfson, chancellor of the University Center System; Theodore Shannon, dean of General Extension, and Donald McNeil, special assistant to the president. That this was the actual list forwarded to Harrington was corroborated by other documentation which, by prior agreement, is not cited here.

The Regents approved Harrington's choice of Donald R. McNeil as chancellor of the merged University Extension on October 22, 1965.[40] Harrington justified McNeil's appointment as providing University Extension with a young, able administrator who possessed a record of scholarly production in the field of history and a broad acquaintance with the field of extension.[41] Indeed, Harrington had involved McNeil as the major researcher in a study of "The Role of the American University in Adult Education." The University of Wisconsin president directed this study, commissioned by the Carnegie Corporation, which took McNeil to most of the major universities in the United States and to some in Canada in 1962 and 1963.[42] After providing McNeil with this background, Harrington took him into the University of Wisconsin central administration in 1963 to aid in developing new programs and in handling foundation relations.[43] In this post McNeil had helped in getting passage of Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 which provided federal support for General Extension programs nationally. The only University of Wisconsin Regent who opposed McNeil's selection as chancellor in October of 1965 was Oshkosh industrialist Carl Steiger. Steiger said his respect for the abilities of Henry Ahlgren led him to prefer the Agricultural Extension director over any other contender for the Extension chancellor position.[44] Regent Jacob Friedrick reflected the view of President Harrington and the other Regents in approving McNeil and rejecting any potential candidate whose former commitment to one of the Extension units might cause problems in implementing the merger.[45]

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[38] VandeBerg interview.

[39] Informal discussions with a number of University Extension personnel who preferred not to be identified.

[40] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, October 22, 1965 (Records office, 421 Administration Building, University of Wisconsin).

[41] Ibid.

As he came on the job as University Extension chancellor in the fall of 1965, McNeil had a number of notions about Extension's future role and some of the problems it faced. In a speech to the National

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[42] "Extension Services Will Consolidate Under New Chancellor," Wisconsin Alumnus, December, 1965, p. 19 (Clipping in the University of Wisconsin Extension Library).

[43] Ibid., p. 20.

[44] Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin, October 22, 1965.

[45] Ibid.

University Extension Association in November of 1962, McNeil had outlined six areas of improvement his national study of extension showed were crucial in making extension work effective: commitment to extension by top university administrators, increased status for extension workers, a definition of university-level education that would provide for flexibility of extension programming, true cooperation as an equal partner with other educational organizations and with organizations utilizing extension facilities, coordination of the various extension elements of a university, and more money for extension.[46] Emphasizing the situation in general extension work, McNeil said his research showed that most university administrators in North America failed to provide sufficient funds and personnel to make extension work effective, utilizing extension primarily for public relations and fund raising. Partly because of this lack of commitment, the status of extension staff members generally was low in the university, McNeil found. "The feelings of contempt and scorn by faculty and administration sometimes are barely disguised. A sensitive and sincere adult educator cannot help be affected," McNeil said. At the same time, McNeil admitted that the situation had brought many an insensitive and incompetent person into extension work. These people, hoping to gain status by "maintaining university-level academic standards," often slavishly copied residence instruction approaches rather than emphasizing patterns more appropriate for adult education. Such academic requirements, combined with the usual administrative demands upon general extension to be largely self-supporting, tended to limit extension's clientele to the "mink coat set," McNeil charged. He wanted extension to reach "the ones who have the least educational opportunity." To do this McNeil called for raising more money from new sources, mentioning the federal government as potentially the most helpful source. In a further bid to strengthen extension, McNeil called for extension organizations to cooperate with other institutions involved in problem solving and other adult education activities and to maintain educational controls over such cooperative programs, refusing to become mere "innkeepers" of facilities used by outside organizations. To increase the flexibility, educational controls, and status of extension, McNeil argued for coordination or merger of the disparate extension elements in American universities. Now, in 1965, McNeil was getting the opportunity to implement his recommendations in a merged University of Wisconsin Extension division.

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[46] Donald R. McNeil, "Crises in University Adult Education," The NUEA Spectator, XXVIII (February-March 1963), pp. 13-16.

McNeil started with a number of factors in his favor. A faculty committee and the University of Wisconsin president had recommended Extension merger and had developed a plan for it in line with McNeil's own thinking. Yet, the plan left him free to move in whatever directions that seemed workable in practice. McNeil believed that the Huitt Committee report was crucial in making the merger possible. "If they had tried to set down what...[the merger] ought to have been, it would have been a compromise and it would have been almost impossible to have had a complete merger, in my view."[47]

The Huitt Committee report was only one advantage McNeil had. He also could look forward to increased federal funding with passage of the Higher Education Act and its Title I.[48] And soon he would receive strong backing from President Harrington to increase the status of Extension on the University of Wisconsin campus. Harrington suggested publicly in a University Extension staff meeting that public service adult education extension activities might soon become a third and co-equal activity with research and classroom teaching in the criteria used to appraise University faculty members.[49]

Along with the advantages, McNeil faced a series of problems in implementing the merger. As an outsider, he had to win the confidence of all elements of the merged University Extension. He had to overcome "some dragging of feet" by those who were not happy with the merger concept and its potential effect on them.[50] He turned down proposals by senior Extension staff members that would have maintained separate operations of the three units.[51] Agricultural Extension Director Henry Ahlgren, for example, at first recommended to McNeil that the former Agricultural Extension operation continue as a distinct unit responsible for University Extension's informal action programs of community service while the General Extension organization operated as the University Extension unit responsible for extending standard University courses through correspondence and other more formal means of instruction. But McNeil was reorganizing the total Extension operation for an emphasis on the kind of action program that had in recent years become the province of Agricultural Extension. While leaders of the formerly separate Extension units worked to educate McNeil to the strengths of their respective organizations, McNeil educated them in the concept of a unified University Extension emphasizing informal, public service programs.

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[47] McNeil interview, October 5, 1967

[48] See Chapter 1.

[49] Fred Harvey Harrington, "The University and the State," The New Outreach of the University, Proceedings of the Annual University Extension Faculty Conference, October 11-14, 1966, p. 16.

[50] Donald R. McNeil, "The Year of the Merger," reprint from The NUEA Spectator, January, 1967, p. 4 (University Extension Library). See, also, letters to the editor, "Faculty Never Had It So Bad," signed "Grieved and Hopeless," Capital-Times, Madison, Wisconsin, November 5, 1966, p. 24, and "A Letter for Help," signed "Despairing Staff Member," Wisconsin State Journal, Madison, Wisconsin, November 9, 1966, p. 14.

McNeil's concept of a strong University Extension chancellor ran into difficulty from administrators in the College of Agriculture and the Milwaukee campus who balked at giving up many of the controls they formerly exercised over Extension. With the cooperation of former Agricultural Extension Director Henry Ahlgren and his top staff, McNeil overcame the opposition of the College of Agriculture to the University Extension chancellor exercising effective de facto control over the former Agricultural Extension operation.[52] Once he convinced College of Agriculture Dean Glenn Pound that an effective merger would not destroy the relationship of research, teaching, and extension in the College of Agriculture, McNeil received unanimous endorsement for a real merger from the College of Agriculture faculty meeting.[53] He did not fare as well with the University of Wisconsin's Milwaukee campus. Like the College of Agriculture, the administration of the Milwaukee campus wanted to run its Extension operation by itself.[54] While McNeil had succeeded in gaining the cooperation of the College of Agriculture, by mid-1968 he had not yet gained acceptance from the Milwaukee administration for his merger concept and for his own final authority in all Extension matters.[55]

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[51] Ahlgren interview and McNeil interview, October 5, 1967.

In implementing the Extension merger, McNeil utilized the method Ralph Huitt used in getting committee approval of merger in the first place-- consultation and "briefing sessions" for nearly six months in which a number of administrators of each Extension element informed each other of their operations.[56] McNeil also appointed another committee under the chairmanship of Professor Wilson Thiede of the School of Education to recommend what form the structure of University Extension should take.[57] The Thiede Committee, which included some members of the defunct Huitt Committee, took several months to hammer out a flexible plan of organization which McNeil approved after some modifications.[58] The Thiede Committee developed both an organizational chart and a set of guidelines for conducting Extension activities. The "Guidelines" called for University Extension to operate on a problem-solving basis with a flexible mix of separately administered programs and programs conducted cooperatively with campus departments.[59]

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[52] Glenn S. Pound, dean of the College of Agriculture, letter to Don McNeil, April 7, 1966; Minutes of the Called Meeting of the Faculty of the College of Agriculture, May 26, 1966 (both documents in Extension Chancellor's Office), and McNeil interview, October 26, 1967.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Harrington interview and Vice-Chancellor Charles Vevier letter to Donald R. McNeil (blind carbon copy to Fred Harvey Harrington), June 7, 1966 (Fred Harvey Harrington files, University of Wisconsin Archives).

[55] Ibid. and J. Martin Klotsche, University of Wisconsin--Milwaukee chancellor, letter to Donald R. McNeil, June 17, 1966 (Extension Chancellor's Office).

At the root of McNeil's efforts was the attempt to develop one University Extension of broad interests that would fuse General Extension's "separatist" Extension operation concept with the Agricultural Extension concept of an Extension unit integrated with campus departments. McNeil fought for the mix in the new organization because he believed, as former General Extension Director Louis Reber had argued years before, that Extension would fail in the long run to maintain the support of campus departments in competition with the high priorities placed by departments on research and resident teaching.[60] Unlike Reber, however, McNeil recognized that some departments like the College of Agriculture would accord the extension function equal status.[61] He was willing to let the College of Agriculture, for example, initiate merit increase and promotion recommendations and to recruit for positions agreed to by University Extension. "I fully recognize the great benefits derived from the integrated approach, and I propose to maintain and build upon that," he wrote to College of Agriculture Dean Glenn Pound. "However, the Board of Regents created a unit entitled 'University Extension,' and those of us who have been assigned the duties of implementing this must retain the ultimate responsibility for the extension function."[62] McNeil believed University Extension must have de facto as well as de jure control if Extension was to gain equality throughout the campus.[63]

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[56] McNeil interview, October 26, 1967.

[57] _Ibid._ Thiede was president-elect of the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.

[58] _Ibid._

[59] Special Advisory Committee on Organization and Structure for University Extension, "Guidelines," March 29, 1966 (Extension Chancellor's Office).

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[60] McNeil interview, October 5, 1967.

[61] Donald R. McNeil letter to Dean Glenn S. Pound, May 13, 1966 (Extension Chancellor's Office). The dichotomy drawn in this paper between General Extension's "separate" operation and Agricultural Extension's integrated operation refers to a difference in conceptualization rather than to any "black and white" difference in operation. In many ways, General Extension in practice operated on an integrated basis with some campus departments during the time that the University Center System was a part of General Extension. On the other hand, the "integrated" Agricultural Extension field staff had problems at times in gaining the cooperation of the on-campus College of Agriculture specialists.

[62] _Ibid_.

[63] McNeil interview, October 5, 1967.

Besides consulting closely with his own Extension staff and with other campus departments that showed interest in University Extension, McNeil engaged in other activities to bring off the merger successfully. He moved most of the former Agricultural Extension administrators out of the College of Agriculture and shuffled them into University Extension quarters with former General Extension and radio-TV staff members.[64] This action showed McNeil's understanding of organizational psychology, for the physical dispersion and mixing of the staff would break up former patterns of operation that might impede effective merger. In naming administrators from the old Extension units to head the new University Extension departments recommended by the Thiede Committee, McNeil again mixed the members of the old units. In a number of cases, former Agricultural Extension administrators found themselves in charge of former General Extension staff members while former General Extension administrators headed former Agricultural Extension staff members.[65] McNeil visited every county in Wisconsin to talk with members of local county board agricultural committees, a mechanism which had long provided the former Agricultural Extension with local advice and a grass roots political base. McNeil said he found many of these committee members among the most enthusiastic supporters of Extension merger.[66]

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[64] Telephone conversation with Gale VandeBerg, January 2, 1968.

[65] McNeil interview, October 26, 1967.

[66] Ibid.

None the less, the representatives of the agricultural committees of the state's county boards wrote to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to protest McNeil's request that it give the University of Wisconsin Extension chancellor the title of director of Agricultural Extension. McNeil wanted the title so that he would have actual budgetary control of federal grant funds to Wisconsin for agricultural extension work. The agricultural committees wanted any director of Agricultural Extension to have an agricultural background.[67] University President Harrington supported McNeil, sending him and University Vice-President Robert Clodius to Washington to argue the University's case. Again, the University Extension concept of a de facto merger with a strong Extension chancellor was victorious. The Department of Agriculture approved McNeil's budgetary control of its support funds, setting a precedent in ruling that a state university cooperating with the national extension program could appoint whomever it desired as director and could organize the Agricultural Extension program within the university however it wished.[68]

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[67] Letter from representatives of the agricultural committees of Wisconsin's seventy-two county boards to U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman, May 9, 1966 (copy in Fred Harvey Harrington files, University of Wisconsin Archives).

[68] George L. Mehren, assistant U.S. secretary of agriculture, letter to Lloyd G. Owens, county board chairman, June 13, 1966 (Fred Harvey Harrington files, University of Wisconsin Archives); Memorandum of Understanding Between the University of Wisconsin and the United States Department of Agriculture on Cooperative Extension work, July 21, 1966 (Extension Chancellor's Office), and McNeil interview, October 26, 1967.

By maintaining his hold on the University Extension budget and performing as a strong but reasonable chancellor, McNeil succeeded in merging the Extension units far more effectively than expected within the two-and-a-half years to date that he has headed University Extension.[69] Besides implementing the merger and bringing the full resources of the Extension units to bear on Wisconsin's problems, McNeil set two major goals for his administration: development of a flexible mix of outside funding to allow more programs for those who cannot pay for them and development of a system of University staff promotion providing credit for Extension work equal to that given for residence teaching and research.[70] The two efforts had a relationship. McNeil explained the relationship by describing the case of an able assistant professor who had spent large amounts of time in the Negro inner core of Milwaukee organizing the black community, helping the community gain improvements in the city's services to the ghetto and interpreting the problems and needs of the black community to the larger community. When he came up for promotion, his campus department came close to rejecting him because he had not taught enough classes, had not published as much as other departmental staff, and had few graduate students working under him.[71] He had spent his time helping the poor and was not getting professional credit for it. In an attempt to overcome this sort of block to Extension's development as a problem solving agency, the University administration has backed the recommendation of the Huitt Committee on Extension reorganization to create a new set of faculty committees to handle promotions of extension-oriented faculty members who fail to gain fair hearing in their own campus departments.[72]

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[69] Harrington interview.

[70] McNeil interview, October 26, 1967. The University Faculty Council in 1968 was studying a proposed reorganization of the University's system of faculty promotion that would open the way for increased rewards for Extension service.

[71] _Ibid._, October 5, 1967.

In a little more than two years University Extension at the University of Wisconsin had gone far toward meeting the six requirements for effective Extension operations laid down by Donald McNeil when he addressed the National University Extension Association as an historian of extension nearly three years before he became director of the University of Wisconsin's Extension operation. University Extension at Wisconsin had the commitment of the top University administrators. Extension operations were becoming more coordinated. Measures were under way to increase the status of Extension in the University. McNeil was advocating Extension leadership in cooperative endeavors with other organizations throughout the state, and he was finding some successes.[73] Programs in Milwaukee's inner core showed the implementation to some extent of McNeil's recommendation to extend problem solving programs beyond the limits of the middle class. Such programs, however, have as yet been mostly small, pilot efforts.

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[72] Ibid., October 26, 1967.

[73] Donald R. McNeil, "The New University Extension," The New Outreach of the University, Proceedings of the Annual Extension Faculty Conference, October 11-14, 1966, pp. 7 and 8; McNeil letters to Robert Clodius, February 21 and 22, 1966, and McNeil letter to Walker Wyman, chairman of the Council of State University Presidents, December 7, 1965 (Fred Harvey Harrington files, University of Wisconsin Archives).

One of the major problems still facing McNeil in 1968 was how to achieve increased utilization of Extension by those who lacked the resources to pay to take part.[74] He had failed thus far to find the increased outside support he called for in his sixth recommendation to the NUEA, based on his national study of Extension. Expecting increased federal funding once the Vietnam War ended, McNeil in 1968 had set his sights also on increased funding of Extension by state agencies interested in problem solving programs.[75]

It was clear by 1968 that effective leadership by University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington, University Extension Chancellor Donald McNeil, University political scientist Ralph Huitt, and others had brought a reasonably effective merger of the University's Extension units into being. This leadership, in concert with the change in the state's urban-rural population balance and the belief by University of Wisconsin administrators that a united Extension operation would strengthen their requests for federal funds, gave impetus to the implementation of the merger concept which earlier administrators had advocated sporadically without effect. The merger was now in being.

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[74] McNeil interview, October 26, 1967.

[75] Donald R. McNeil, "The New University Extension," p. 13.

The goal was to strengthen and preserve the University by adapting to changing social conditions. Whenever the Vietnam War ended, the University of Wisconsin would be ready to accept the vastly increased funds its administration expected would flow from the federal government to make the nation a better place to live. For both idealistic and practical reasons, the University of Wisconsin was fast tooling up to play an important role in applied research, in problem solving. The question was whether a university ought to perform such a role.

Chapter 6

THE PUBLIC SERVICE ROLE CHALLENGED

Whether the university should play a direct role in solving the political, economic, and social problems facing the nation was at root a philosophical question. University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington had made his position clear, readying University of Wisconsin Extension to respond to the needs articulated by the society and its leaders.[1] His position was open to criticism, however, by those who held a different view of what a university should be. In 1968 these critics were potentially capable of destroying Harrington's effort to strengthen the University of Wisconsin by merging Extension and involving it more extensively in community action. At the same time, Harrington's conception of University Extension also had the capacity for undercutting the critics, removing the sources for the criticism and, indeed, bolstering the University as an effective institution.

Over the centuries the university evolved a series of different roles and patterns, most of which became a part of the modern American university.[2] In the Middle Ages, groups of students in Bologna, Italy, employed teachers to instruct them in what were believed to be the ultimate in civilized thought-- the surviving classics of the Christian church, the Greeks, and the Romans. Thus was set the precedent for the so-called liberal arts, for student control of higher education, and for a conception of the students as the university. In a much changed form, the liberal arts remained an important part of college life in 1968. Even "student power" remained in some of the universities of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. And there were students in the United States, indeed at the University of Wisconsin, who wanted to see this part of the history of the university achieve prominence in the U.S.

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[1] Interview with Fred Harvey Harrington, University of Wisconsin, February 7, 1968. Also, Fred Harvey Harrington, "The University and the State," The New Outreach of the University, Proceedings of the Annual Extension Faculty Conference, October 11-14, 1966, p. 20.

Quite early in the development of the university, though, the role of the church and that of the university faculty became dominant, as exemplified by the University of Paris and the universities at Oxford and Cambridge. These institutions also taught the classics. But it should be remembered that education in the liberal arts was also vocational training, for it was the classics that contained what knowledge Europeans then had available for preparing lawyers, doctors, and clergymen.

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[2] See Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, three vols. edited by F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936); Charles H. Haskins, The Rise of Universities, (Henry Holt and Co., Inc., 1923); Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952); Clark Kerr, The Uses of the University, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), and Frank P. Graves, "The Evolution of Our Universities," University of Pennsylvania Bulletin, XX (October 15, 1919), pp. 25-44.

The early colleges in the American colonies and then the United States also emphasized the classics and training for the leadership elite. After the "Great Awakening," large numbers of small sectarian colleges sprang up to provide a protective environment for youth and to supply ministers who could read scriptures in the original text. The printing of books in the vernacular, the concept of equality furthered by a strong frontier culture, and a rejection of European values early in the life of the new nation resulted in serious questioning of an institution based on the Greek and Latin classics.

Years of public dissatisfaction and agitation in the United States regarding the traditional college led in 1862 to federal support of a series of institutions of higher education that would emphasize a more practical education useful to larger numbers of Americans-- to the businessmen, the farmers, and the workers of the nation and their sons and daughters. These were either new state-supported institutions or existing ones like the University of Wisconsin that adapted to the demands of their times.[3] The struggle for a new curriculum or for new institutions often pitted politicians and university governing boards responsive to public opinion against university faculties committed to the liberal arts.

While the traditional liberal arts continued, gradually adapting enough to survive the increased competition for students from the new practical studies, subject matter fields began to mushroom. Schools of agriculture, schools of education, schools of engineering, schools of journalism, and schools of library science developed within many of the existing colleges and universities. Business and its multitudinous subdivisions succeeded in building into existing colleges and universities programs that ranged from accounting to risk and insurance. These burgeoning new subjects in higher education developed out of the demand of certain strong interest groups and out of university administrators' efforts to block the growth of new institutions that would meet these demands and eventually provide competition for the existing universities in seeking students and money.

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[3] See Chapters 2 and 3.

A part of this move to serve the various publics supporting the universities was the rise of the extension concept although extension achieved real strength in the U.S. only in a limited number of institutions like the University of Wisconsin and then for only a limited period of time.[4] Public service as such apparently did not appeal to large numbers of university faculty members and administrators. Teaching students residing on the campus was their first responsibility, the professors believed, and many thought of this responsibility as a full-time one which they would be shirking by engaging in public service activities.[5]

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[4] See Chapters 1, 3, and 4.

[5] See Chapter 3.

Another responsibility for higher education and another view of its role became prominent in Germany in the nineteenth century, gaining full embodiment into U.S. educational life after the establishment of Johns Hopkins University in 1876. This was the concept of the university as a basic research institution. The concept took hold vigorously in the U.S. during World War II when government and business saw the potentialities in utilizing institutions of higher learning for the development of new products and such weapons as the atomic bomb. Soon scientific research became dominant in the universities, surpassing the traditional liberal arts programs in prestige and leading to a downgrading of all kinds of teaching except, perhaps, graduate seminars. Critics soon decried the heavy emphasis placed on a staff member's research and publications, rather than on his teaching, in judging his value in an institution.

Despite the critics, University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington correctly argued that it was the great research universities that attracted the best students and faculty during the past couple of decades. The institutions that held back on making a commitment to research, he said, hurt only themselves and, in the end, had to accept the research role.[6] In leading the University of Wisconsin and other large state universities into efforts to make applied research a third basic element in the university's responsibilities, Harrington wanted to be sure that these institutions would not be guilty of such foot-dragging in the 1960's in the fast-developing public service area.

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[6] Harrington interview.

In pressing for a stronger extension that would complement residence teaching and research, Harrington opened himself to the wrath of a wide range of critics who charged the university with failing to center upon a basic role. Logan Wilson, president of the American Council on Education, warned universities to avoid becoming "a kind of supermarket trying to please all possible customers or a service station catering to every passerby."[7] Wilson called for the universities to focus on effective teaching and research and to let other organizations handle the area of public service.[8] Robert M. Hutchins, a long-time commentator on higher education, has written that extension should have no place in the university because it interferes with the university's traditional role as conveyor of the best in western culture to residence students.[9]

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[7] Logan Wilson, "Myths and Realities of Institutional Independence," in Logan Wilson, ed., Emerging Patterns in American Higher Education, (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1965), p. 26.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 31, and Harrington interview.

[9] Robert M. Hutchins, The Higher Learning in America, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936), p. 7.

Harrington, however, argued that the university contained the people with the knowledge that might solve the nation's problems. For the university to refuse to engage these minds in practical activity, he contended, would be socially irresponsible. Moreover, Harrington viewed public service as mutually advantageous to the society, the university, and the faculty. By involving themselves in extension work, faculty members could improve their research and teaching and strengthen the university, he believed. Harrington also defended university involvement in applied, practical research from the point of view of a university's narrow self-interest. If other institutions, such as government and private industry, were to become the vehicle for national problem solving, Harrington feared that they would siphon off large numbers of university faculty. Thus, Harrington saw university involvement in public service as essential for the maintenance of the institution at a high level of strength and effectiveness.[10]

Harrington's practical arguments could find little support among a highly articulate group of critics that wanted the university to stop being a "service station" and a professional trade school. Some of these critics looked longingly back to the Middle Ages when, they argued, a strong Christian orientation pervaded the university and gave it unity in an underlying moral philosophy.[11] Whether they attacked the university's orientation toward "vocationalism," its overemphasis on research, or its trend toward increased public service, at the root of the criticism of many of the commentators was a desire for the university to center its work around a moral philosophy that would truly liberalize or civilize its students. They saw university graduates, supposedly among the most civilized members of the culture, dedicated not to mankind but to a narrow professionalism that dehumanized them and their society.[12] They saw a lack of central purpose in the university as having allowed the commercial, political, and military establishments to take it over for their own use because they possessed the money to provide research contracts to the university and its researchers.[13] The takeover had, in Robert Hutchins' words, "brought us to the point where if we are not blown up we shall be suffocated or run over. We know everything except how to make democracy work and what to do with ourselves. We know everything except what is most important to us to know."[14]

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[10] Harrington interview.

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[11] See Hutchins, especially p. 96; Ernest Becker, Beyond Alienation, (New York: George Braziller, 1967); Jose Ortega y Gasset, translated by Howard Lee Nostrand, Mission of the University, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1944), especially pp. 54-61, and Mark Van Doren, Liberal Education, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1943), for examples.

[12] See, especially, Gasset, pp. 57 and 58.

[13] Robert Hutchins, "The Multiversity Is Likely to Fall Apart," Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin, July 21, 1967, p. 32.

The critics of practical, vocational higher education in the 1960's were voicing arguments similar to those made one hundred years earlier by University of Wisconsin faculty members who worried that their classical subjects might suffer if their institution accepted the practical land grant responsibilities for agricultural and mechanical education.[15] Both groups, although a hundred years apart, wanted the university to concentrate on the morality supposedly underlying the study of the humanistic liberal arts-- the love of mankind. In the 1960's the advocates of this educational philosophy were no longer the defenders of the status quo. Practical education had become dominant in higher education in the intervening years. But conditions had changed, too. The student in the 1960's found himself preparing for a long life in some profession while civilization teetered only minutes away from massive self-destruction by atomic-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles. In this paradoxical situation, the more concerned, sensitive, and aware students might be expected to listen to critics who questioned not only the educational status quo but the entire society that could fashion such a pattern of life.

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[14] Ibid.

[15] See Chapters 2 and 3.

Many students did respond favorably to the critics in the 1960's although university administrators and American society seemed generally unreceptive. It was the students, of course, who were directly experiencing the educational environment that the critics decried. Based in part upon the critics' arguments, a new student activism arose that sought to introduce a new moral philosophy into the university and into the total society. Exemplifying this student philosophy at the University of Wisconsin was a "Student Handbook" mimeographed by the Students for a Democratic Society and sold during student registration periods. This handbook gave the new student a different picture of the University than the one given in the official University of Wisconsin student handbook. It implicitly favored student power, attacking the official handbook as produced to lead the new student to "fit smoothly into the bureaucratic routine of the University...., setting forth the rules that other people have decided to impose on you."[16] Reflecting the views of many of the critics of the university, this "underground" student handbook stated that the needs of the military-industrial complex set the curriculum for the students. Instead of stimulating independent thought, it suggested, the goal of the university was now "to turn out graduates who will have the technical skills and the adaptive personalities needed by large business corporations and the Government...."[17]

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[16] Students for a Democratic Society, "A Student Handbook," Madison, Wisconsin, no date but apparently fall of 1967, p. 1.

[17] Ibid., pp. 1 and 2.

Unlike some of the critics, the student protesters did not base their morality on a commitment to the existing "liberal arts" curriculum. They had experienced the reality rather than the critics' idealization of these classes and shared the disgust with which such critics as William Arrowsmith and Theodore Roszak viewed the humanities as taught in the 1960's.[18] Arrowsmith charged the humanities with slavishly imitating the sciences for selfish professional advancement in a society that preferred technology to the honest questioning of the values and assumptions upon which the society rested. The liberal arts, Arrowsmith wrote, should deal with values and stop aping science and its amassing of data, its classification approach, and its "objectivity" that often became mere sterility. Terming much of the liberal arts "mindless specialization and irrelevant pedantry," Roszak called for involvement of the university and its professors in political action for the abolition of capital punishment, in organizing freedom schools for the underprivileged, in manning picket lines for civil rights groups, in organizing teach-ins regarding the Vietnam War. Such activities by professors would, in Roszak's plan, carry credit toward faculty promotions and "force a man to reflect on the function and deep purpose of his professional commitment."[19] Once the morality was clear, there would be no further debates on such issues as the Vietnam War and civil rights. And to Roszak, apparently, humanistic study had proved the Vietnam War unsound and civil rights wise. Once the morality was clear, Roszak felt the university's role was to act to destroy the evil by word and deed, not merely to continue pedantically to debate the undebatable. Roszak thus added the dimension of action to the critiques by Robert Hutchins and the other humanistic commentators on the modern university. As Roszak wrote, students at the University of Wisconsin and around the world were engaging in direct action, usually non-violent but sometimes violent, in behalf of humanistic values.[20]

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[18] Theodore Roszak, "On Academic Delinquency," in Theodore Roszak, ed., The Dissenting Academy, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), pp. 3-42, and William Arrowsmith, "The Shame of the Graduate Schools," Harper's Magazine, CCXXXII (March 1966), pp. 51-59.

[19] Roszak, p. 36.

It would be interesting to speculate if Roszak's type of action might find institutional sanction in University of Wisconsin President Harrington's concept of University Extension. If so, then Extension might provide the very synthesis of university life and action desired by those who would criticize Harrington's emphasis on Extension.

It was possible that Harrington's effort to involve the University in solving social problems might provide students with an alternative for the demonstration and, indeed, a moral equivalent for the riot as the means of improving American society. If students could become involved in their professors' programs in Milwaukee's inner core, for example, and gain college credit for it, the University could possibly regain the support of its student critics by enabling them to work constructively for an improved society. Failure of the University to provide such a mechanism for its students encouraged more radical student action to change the University and the society.

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[20] For an analysis of student revolt, see the London Observer article in the Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin, April 8, 1968, p. 31. For a report on student protest at the University of Wisconsin, see the Capital Times, Madison, Wisconsin, October 19, 1967, pp. 1, 4, and 7.

Such a use for the newly merged University Extension apparently was not a part of Harrington's thinking, though. Those planning the merger took virtually no account of residence campus students in developing approaches for increased extension activity. The factors considered were the need for solving national, state-wide, and local problems, the likelihood of the availability of federal funds for this type of extension, ways of attaining the cooperation of the various administrative elements involved, and ways of providing assistance to adults who desired help but could not afford to pay for it. The planners left the resident students out of the planning. One could argue that the students had little interest in extension, thus had little reason to be involved in reorganizing University Extension. Yet, the University of Wisconsin's new emphasis on extension activities would certainly have some effects on the resident students if it involved their professors. Although some involvement of resident students in Extension community action programs was a possibility eventually, one might question whether University Extension could mount programs that satisfied student idealism and, at the same time, avoided arousing the fears of many taxpayers that such programs would bring basic social changes which they opposed. Clearly, the University of Wisconsin would have difficulty channeling student protest into University Extension action programs and gaining acceptance from the society for effecting real social change through Extension.

University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington set the University's course in 1963 for increased activities in Extension public service. At Wisconsin, at least, practical, applied research in public service was likely to become a strong third element in University life, eventually co-equal with residence teaching and more theoretical research. Harrington charted this course as a realist, as an administrator dedicated to maintaining and expanding the important role of his institution in its society. He planned to expand the responsibilities of his University despite articulate criticism of the university as being involved already in too many activities. Although University Extension may eventually become a mechanism for socially acceptable action in behalf of the moral values advocated by critics of the university and by student activists, in 1968 there was no evidence to support any expectation that University Extension was so conceived by Harrington. Despite the difficulties inherent in making University Extension a constructive alternative to protest demonstrations for concerned resident students, the new, merged Extension mechanism did, at least, offer that potential. It was conceivable, then, in 1968 that Harrington's emphasis on university public service might, unwittingly, have opened a way to the solution of a serious internal problem confronting universities and society as a whole-- the alienation of crucial members of its resident student bodies from the mainstream of American life.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington in 1965 succeeded in merging the Extension elements of the University after other administrations had failed in efforts to implement such a policy during more than fifty years. Harrington did so as part of an overall plan to enhance the position of the university as an agency of applied economic, social, and community development in American society. By merging the Extension units at the University of Wisconsin Harrington could demonstrate his commitment to a stronger public service effort and show his willingness to make efficient use of federal funds for this purpose which might otherwise have gone to different institutions than the university. While successful in gaining university participation in government plans to tackle the nation's urban and rural problems, Harrington faced opposition to this broadening of the university's role, opposition that threatened to undo his efforts to strengthen the University of Wisconsin and the American university generally.

Critics of an expansion of practical, applied research by universities in the 1960's had precedent in the struggle by the classical, liberal arts professors at the University of Wisconsin and elsewhere in the 1860's to maintain the university as a liberal arts institution against efforts to make it over into an institution of practical, applied arts and sciences. The success of the University of Wisconsin Regents in overcoming this opposition in the 1880's enabled the University to grow strong over the years. The Regents' efforts to make the University a more practical institution had also opened the way to the introduction of the extension concept at the University of Wisconsin, first in Farmers' Institutes and soon after in the presentation of cultural liberal arts lectures by the University faculty in communities throughout the state. The Extension public service programs, in turn, gained increased support for the University.

Despite the attempts of General Extension Dean Louis Reber to combine all extension activities in a separate General Extension operation, both Agricultural Extension and, later, the University's new radio service developed organizational structures and educational philosophies of their own. Agricultural Extension, strongly supported by the increasingly popular College of Agriculture and aided after 1914 by federal funds, emphasized informal, non-credit educational approaches to help farmers solve their practical, everyday problems. After early efforts of a practical nature, General Extension by the 1930's found itself administratively exposed as a separate organization and required to raise much of its own support from the fees of program participants. As a consequence, General Extension became more and more wedded to the formal educational patterns of the residence campus. Furthering this trend was University policy that General Extension administer campus centers around the state that provided the first two years of courses from the University's standard residence curriculum.

Such disparate approaches and the existence of three different Extension bureaucracies made it difficult to effect any kind of Extension merger.

While Agricultural Extension held an enviable position of power within the University of Wisconsin, its activities in behalf of scientific farming to increase production resulted in furthering the trend to bigness in farming which drove many rural people to the cities in search of a better life. Sensing that it was beginning to lose its clientele, Agricultural Extension trailed the migrating farmers into the cities with 4-H youth programs and other services familiar to the new city dwellers. At the same time, General Extension began to get involved in the 1950's and 1960's in broad-gauged, foundation-supported regional development programs attempting to solve problems facing large areas that encompassed urban and rural areas alike. And, too, improved transportation and communications were breaking down the former barriers between city and country. Even the administrators of the Extension units came to a gradual recognition that some form of merger of their similar activities was likely.

Fred Harvey Harrington expedited the timetable for merger when he entered the presidency of the University of Wisconsin in 1962. He gained the Regents' approval to set in motion a merger of the Agricultural Extension, General Extension, and radio-TV units. Utilizing an effective political science practitioner as chairman, Harrington appointed a committee to develop a specific plan for the merger. He appointed Donald R. McNeil as the University Extension chancellor and supported his efforts to make University Extension a truly effective mechanism for university public service in Wisconsin.

In readying University Extension to play an increasing role in solving the economic, social, and community problems of the state and nation, Harrington was betting on a vastly increased federal support program for such activities by universities. Because of the Vietnam War, federal funds had merely trickled into University Extension by 1968. Whenever the Vietnam War ended, however, the University of Wisconsin would be ready to involve itself in federally funded action programs.

An increase in extension public service programs, however, would mean that the University of Wisconsin was expanding its responsibilities at a time when its critics were already questioning the university for its heavy involvement in research and professional training and encouraging the university to redirect its interests toward the humanistic liberal arts. Demonstrations in behalf of humanistic causes were rife among college students at the University of Wisconsin and around the world in the late 1960's. One wondered if the University's resident students might actively oppose University Extension as just another intrusion upon the time of their professors and their University.

On the other hand, it was possible that University Extension might become a positive force in building an improved relationship between student and University as it had always been for the building of good relations between the University and the taxpaying public. It was possible, for example, that University Extension public service programs might eventually involve resident students of the University and provide them with a positive outlet for the frustrations that had led them to engage in protest demonstrations. Indeed, it was possible that University Extension might become a moral equivalent for the violent type of protest.

University of Wisconsin President Fred Harvey Harrington pressed for a merger in Extension and an increase in University public service to help preserve the place of the university in American society. Although Harrington did not involve the resident students in developing his plans, he may find the students influential in whether his plans succeed. If student protest demonstrations were to break out against Extension as an intrusion upon the University, Harrington's efforts in behalf of Extension might have results opposite from those he expected. Just as Agricultural Extension failed to preserve the family farm and helped to achieve its own organizational destruction, Harrington's effort to enhance the University by strengthening Extension could result in such a reaction that the University suffered instead of making gains. If Harrington were to succeed in achieving acceptance of the extension function by all elements of the University, though, the University of Wisconsin would be in an excellent position to utilize increased federal funds when they materialized. Having combined Agricultural Extension, General Extension, and radio-TV, the University of Wisconsin had effectively concentrated its resources for public service outreach. Merger in Extension enabled the University to focus its public service activities more efficiently. The University of Wisconsin in 1968 was in a position to give better service to the taxpayers of Wisconsin, provide student activists interested in humanistic values with a moral equivalent for violent demonstrations, and gain increased financial support. Potentially, the University of Wisconsin had much to gain by Harrington's decision for merger in Extension.

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SECONDARY SOURCES

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by J. Frank Cook on the history of the University of Wisconsin's College of Letters and Science. The Curti-Carstensen study not only dealt with the development of the University and its Agricultural and General Extension units, but also fit the University into an historical context of U.S. higher education. Both Rosentreter and Glover did effective histories of their subjects. Penn compiled an excellent chronicle of events in the development of radio at the University of Wisconsin, but his treatment of the subject became too much of an encomium to the low echelon University staff members who created and maintained the University radio station against considerable odds. Cook's preliminary draft of his Ph.D. chapter on "The Morrill Land Grant College Act and the Reorganization of the University of Wisconsin, 1862-1866," aided in suggesting a number of sources regarding the development of the University of Wisconsin as a land grant institution.

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